Special Issue: Nationalism

Critical Review

An Interdisciplinary Journal *of* Politics *and* Society

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The Myth of Civic Nationalism	**Bernard Yack, Nicholas Xenos**
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*Jeffrey Friedman**

NATIONALISM IN THEORY AND REALITY

Nationalism poses both political and theoretical problems of immense importance: not only the concrete and terrifying problems often facing those who live on the wrong side of a national border, but abstract and complex problems in our understanding of the modern world. Nationalism is the source not only of monstrous cruelties such as those recently experienced in the Balkans, but of two sets of theoretical difficulties: first, the challenge of explaining the sources of this ubiquitous modern phenomenon; second, that of knowing how to react to it.

In recent years, a small but growing literature of exemplary quality has addressed the first challenge. In such works as Eugen Weber's *Peasants into Frenchmen* (1976), Ernest Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983), and Liah Greenfeld's *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (1992), scholars of nationalism as an historical phenomenon have emphasized its novelty and artificiality, but have at the same time disagreed with those, like Eric Hobsbawm (whose *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* is discussed below by Weber), who conclude that it is *merely* an artifact—let alone one that can be easily superseded. Rather, they have variously related nationalism to the deeply rooted imperatives of modern state-building (Weber, Anderson), modern economics (Gellner), and the modern devotion to equality (Greenfeld).

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Nationalism and Liberalism

Greenfeld's bold and initially counterintuitive linking of nationalism with egalitarianism is a promising point of departure for meeting the second theoretical challenge of nationalism, that which it poses for ethical theory. The basic normative difficulty of nationalism is its *in*egalitarianism: its apotheosis of a subset of human beings—one's fellow citizens—as worthy of special ethical obligation. This view of the moral universe differs sharply from the tendency of liberalism to base rights, entitlements, and obligations on some quality shared by all human beings—whether their cognitive capacities, their ability to choose and will freely, or their ability to experience pleasure and pain. Thus, as Amartya Sen (1992, ch. 1) has pointed out, the division between classical liberal or libertarian and redistributive liberals turns not on the issue of liberty versus equality, but on the question, "Equality of what?" The redistributive liberal wants equal resources for all; the libertarian liberal, equal freedom. By positing equal rights to noninterference, libertarians trump the liberty of the would-be murderer or thief, subordinating her freedom to the equal respect she owes her potential victims. Alternatively, liberal egalitarianism can take the form not of devotion to equal freedom, but to equal opportunity, equal welfare or well-being, or equal control over political authority.

Greenfeld's thesis suggests, however, that the liberalism we find implemented in the real world of nation-states does not live up to the egalitarian aspirations of liberal theory. Instead, really existing liberal egalitarianism is a matter of "the fundamental equality of those *defined as members of the nation*" (below, 177, emph. added). Only one's fellow nationals are thought to be entitled to the nation-state's protection of equal rights. Citizenship—the guarantor of equal entitlement to protection against rights violations; to the receipt of government health, educational, and welfare benefits; to the freedom to live and work within a nation-state's borders, and to a voice in its governance—turns out to be an entitlement not of all human beings, but only of those born within a nation-state's borders, and to the small numbers who manage to negotiate its naturalization procedures.

Although the partiality—the inegalitarianism—of really existing liberal states is obvious, its normative significance has not received

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the attention it deserves. Indeed, the egalitarian policies pursued within the borders of the nation-state are often said to be justified on liberal grounds; but the egalitarianism of liberal theory has no room for invidious geographical distinctions.

John Rawls's difference principle, for example, stipulates that material inequalities should only be allowed insofar as they serve to raise the standard of living of "the least advantaged members of society" (Rawls 1985, 225). Using the difference principle to justify intra-national egalitarian policies requires equating the boundaries of "society" with those of an existing nation-state (and stipulating that redistribution would, in fact, improve the condition of the poorest inhabitants of the area circumscribed by that state's borders). The philosophical basis of the difference principle, however, is the arbitrariness of inherited wealth and talents. Rawls banishes this arbitrariness by depriving his hypothetical social contractors of any knowledge of their possessions or capacities. But why should they not also, and for like reasons, be deprived of knowledge of their birthplace? Does it make sense to equate fairness with ameliorating the condition of the least advantaged in a hyperaffluent society such as the United States, if this means turning one's back on the much worse off who happen to live outside the borders defining that "society"? (Cf. Beitz 1979.)

In attacking the privileges of birth, political or economic, liberals of both classical and contemporary vintage give voice to the conviction that one's humanity, rather than accidental circumstances, should determine one's rights. This egalitarianism is traduced by the inescapable particularism of the modern state. A truly liberal society would encompass all human beings. It would extend any welfare benefits to all humankind, not just to those born within arbitrary borders; and far from prohibiting the importing of "foreign" workers or goods they have produced, or the exporting of jobs to them across national boundaries, it would encourage the free flow of labor, the goods, and capital, helping to satisfy the difference principle in a much more meaningful way than is achieved by income redistribution within "societies" of relatively homogeneous wealth. If one is committed to easing the burden of the worst off, the fostering of free trade and free migration between the First, Second, and Third Worlds should be much more urgent tasks than the redistribution of wealth within the nation-states of the First.

First World liberals usually invert these priorities, not only by

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opposing the unlimited influx of low-priced labor and goods and the outflow of jobs, but by defending income redistribution programs whose beneficiaries are restricted to the citizens of a particular First World nation. Such programs require as a political necessity the exclusion from their benefits, and thus from citizenship, of "foreigners," since otherwise the expense of the programs would vastly exceed the willingness of native taxpayers to fund them. Through both their immigration and trade and their welfare policies, then, First World nation-states place the (relatively high) income of their conationals in direct competition with the (disastrously low) income of "foreigners," and sacrifice the latter to the former. "Social justice" comes to require barring residents of other countries from improving their lot through migration, since unlimited immigration would be fatal to the high wages and the generous welfare benefits of the First World. Measured against liberal standards such as those adumbrated by Rawls, therefore, really existing liberal polities should be condemned for positively harming the interests of the "least advantaged": those, that is, who live outside their borders.

With the fall of communism and in reaction to the rise of conservative political movements, the previously tempered commitment of Western intellectuals to their welfare states has become much less self-critical. This has led to a number of attempts to close the gap between liberal theory and nationalist reality—not by reforming the reality, to be sure, but by reformulating the theory. One of these theoretical efforts appropriates the empirical distinction between "civic" and "ethnic" nationalism so as to legitimize the particularism of civic, or liberal, nations. This move is sharply criticized by Bernard Yack in these pages.

Empirical students of nationalism, such as Greenfeld, rely (in part) on the civic/ethnic dichotomy in order to distinguish individualist and democratic nationalism from more authoritarian variants. As such, the dichotomy is merely a taxonomic device whose value is a function of its usefulness in classifying regimes. It does no ethical work, at least in principle; and its employment certainly does not commit the scholar to endorsing the pretensions entailed by either civic or ethnic nationalism. The *normative* appropriation of civic nationalism, in contrast, tends to conflate ideology with reality so as to justify the inegalitarian practices of really existing liberal states.

The ideology of civic nationalism depicts nationhood as a matter

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of individual choice. When this ideology is appropriated as a norm, there emerges an apparently egalitarian grounding for the division of humanity into separate "societies," each with its own government whose primary duty is to its own citizens. For if one of the equal human entitlements defended by liberalism is a right to freedom, and if freedom includes the ability to choose which society to belong to, then perhaps the exclusionary policies of nation-states can be justified as expressions of egalitarianism.

This possibility, however, requires the assumption that allegiance to nation-states is, in fact, the product of free choice. And as Yack's essay shows, that assumption is false. It is not the case that most, let alone all, of the residents of liberal nation-states choose their citizenship.

More to the present point, one's legal status as a citizen, as opposed to one's feeling of national identity, is almost never predicated on one's embrace of a liberal civic creed. Even though naturalization procedures sometimes include a dose of civic education, the rights and obligations of the citizens of liberal nation-states—like the psychological ties that bind them together—are derived overwhelmingly from the place where they were born, not from the ideas in their heads. When a natural disaster strikes southern California, the residents of New York do not base their approval of government relief efforts on the political beliefs of those affected by the calamity. Conversely, the question of whether Mexicans living just a few yards south of southern California are entitled to the same relief available to Mexican-American citizens—or to the same jobs—is rarely (if ever) conceived as a question of the Mexicans' political creed. It is solely a matter of their nationality: "we" feel obliged to take care of "our own" first, and the basis of this disposition in arbitrary national borders is rarely questioned. While the civic/ethnic dichotomy may capture the myths governing certain intellectuals' understanding of their own political allegiances, then, it does not do justice to the mass political basis of nationalism in either "civic" or "ethnic" polities. Supervening on both creed and ethnicity is geography, the usual criterion of nationality in the modern world—especially in "civic" nations. What happens in Mexico, or Bosnia, is not "our problem"; what happens "here" is.

Moreover, even if the common acceptance of a certain political creed is widespread in a given country, and even if this is vital to the maintenance of liberal institutions and to avoiding imperialism

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and civil strife, it can have no more relevance to the proper obligations of a liberal state than it has to the actual conditions such states impose on citizenship. The liberal obligation to refrain from harming another person, or the obligation to extend positive assistance to her, are not contingent on her beliefs. Classical liberals do not sanction the murder of welfare statists or communists, nor do redistributive liberals restrict welfare rights to those who endorse the tenets of *A Theory of Justice* or *Taking Rights Seriously*. It is the equal humanity of human beings that, according to liberalism, generates their rights, and humanity has as little to do with the content of one's beliefs as with the location of one's birthplace. Egalitarian liberalism seems irrevocably hostile, then, to exclusivist nation-states.

The second main attempt to deal with the chasm between liberal theory and reality, accordingly, sanctions departures from egalitarianism by particularizing the applicability of equality and all other ethical norms. I refer to the recent wave of communitarian political theory, exemplified by David Miller's *On Nationality* and Yael Tamir's *Liberal Nationalism*; and to the earlier wave of communitarian philosophy, which provided communitarian political thought with its characteristic procedures.

Communitarian political theory attempts, *inter alia*, to provide reasons for believing that "the duties we owe to our fellow-nationals are different from, and more extensive than, the duties we owe to human beings as such," and thus that "there is no objection in principle to institutional schemes—such as welfare states—that are designed to deliver benefits exclusively to those who fall within the same boundaries as ourselves" (Miller 1995, 11). The reasons provided by the communitarian political philosophers, however, are both elusive and extraordinarily conventionalist. They emerge only indirectly, from critiques of the failure of traditional liberal theory to account for nationalist sentiments and for the role of these sentiments in sustaining really existing liberal states. Communitarian political theory thereby advances our grasp of political reality, but at the expense of taking its legitimacy for granted. Miller (1995, 70), for instance, discusses "the potency of nationality as a source of personal identity" as if its potency *ipso facto* established its normative validity; he seems to equate what is "strongly felt" with what is right. Similarly, Tamir (1993, 121) argues that "a feeling, or an illusion, of closeness and shared fate" is "a precondition of distributive justice," equating the political basis of redistribution with its moral legitimacy.

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Tamir explains that "inward-oriented distributive policies" require "willingness to assume the burdens entailed by distributive justice" (Tamir 1993, 118); that is, really existing welfare states rely on the willingness of their taxpayer-citizens to vote to redistribute income to their fellow nationals. Conventional liberalism cannot encourage this willingness because it does not distinguish between fellow nationals and fellow human beings. It must be supplanted, then, by liberal nationalism. Since "communal solidarity" creates the requisite political willingness to redistribute, thus endowing "particularistic relations with moral power," the "community-like nature of the nation-state is particularly well suited, and perhaps even necessary, to the notion of the liberal welfare state" (ibid., 121). Since it is *assumed* that the liberal welfare state is "the setting in which ideas of social justice can be pursued" (Miller 1995, 185), the preconditions of that state are worth defending. And since "the welfare state—and indeed, programmes to protect minority rights—have always been *national* projects, justified on the basis that members of a community must protect one another and guarantee one another equal respect" (ibid., 187), nationalism is clearly one of those preconditions, and is, therefore, legitimate. "The fact that the liberal welfare state is necessarily predicated on certain 'national beliefs' " (Tamir 1993, 117) is thus taken to establish the entitlement of such beliefs to philosophical acceptance. What neither Tamir nor Miller reveals, however, is why we should accept the premise that the liberal welfare state is a good thing to begin with, if in fact, by egalitarian standards, it is a hindrance to justice.

The liberal-nationalist style of thought surely has its origins in communitarian philosophy. This movement of the 1980s, associated primarily with Alasdair MacIntyre, Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor, and Michael Walzer, has no necessary connection to nationalism. It is, however, conducive to all forms of group-based particularistic reasoning, including liberal nationalism. All four philosophical communitarians suggest that the problem with liberalism is, in a word, its universalism: not its egalitarian content (which all the communitarians try, in one way or another, to preserve),[1] but its attempt to derive this content in the traditional philosophic manner, through reasoning about what is true or right in all times and places.

The implication of the communitarian philosophers' various attacks on universalism (albeit an implication each of them takes pains to soften)[2] is to relativize morality, reducing it to the dicta of

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one's timebound, placebound "identity." The equation of morality with identity has obvious general affinities with liberal-nationalist arguments that take for granted the moral obligations that "we," as liberals and nationalists, find attractive. Moreover, Walzer, Taylor, and Sandel each make the important and accurate observation that egalitarian redistribution takes place almost entirely within the borders of nation-states that find no theoretical justification in conventional liberalism, because such liberalism insists on extending its egalitarian precepts to all.[3] The communitarian philosophers thus establish not only the conventionalist procedures but the substantive starting point of communitarian political theory: the realization that far from depending on cosmopolitanism, as the left had tended to assume, real-world liberalism relies on particularist allegiances of the sort usually defended by the *right.*

Thus, the communitarian theorists attempt to legitimize the welfare state as the product of "our" particular community's values, rather than of universally valid principles, making political theory the servant of our preexisting institutional commitments, rather than being a reflection on whether these commitments are sound in the first place. Rather than asking what is right or good, the liberal nationalist asks what beliefs or "illusions" will "justify the principle of nationality" (Miller 1995, 64).[4] In concrete terms, this means providing "a convincing account" of the "social forces that keep society as a distinct, separate, and more significantly, a continuous framework" (Tamir 1993, 118). What Miller (1995, 79) calls our "commonly recognized obligations to fellow-nationals" appear to be so self-evident to him and Tamir, however, that neither author considers the threat such obligations pose to their own egalitarian convictions, both practically and theoretically. As a practical matter, such obligations may involve condemning residents of the Third World to lives of misery by barring them from employment and the other benefits that First World states restrict to their citizenry. At the theoretical level, the problem is that if one's moral obligations are coextensive with one's historically contingent sentiments, anything goes. If a community is *not* animated by egalitarian sentiments, it would seem wrong to try to induce such sentiments or otherwise to try to extract egalitarian commitments from it. Indeed, if morality is a matter of sentiment, it is difficult to see how one could say that one form of morality is better than another,

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equally deeply felt form. But such objections will already be familiar to students of philosophical communitarianism.

The Psychology and History of Nationalism

It is possible, however, to put a universalistic gloss on political communitarianism by grounding the desirability of catering to people's feelings on a commitment to their well-being. This form of liberal nationalism is suggested by Miller's suggestion that nationalist sentiments are akin to familial and local relationships and friendships (Miller 1995, 50–51). In this view nationalist preferences play the role of individual "tastes" in modern utilitarian theory: one simply assumes that people will be made happy if their tastes are satisfied. Thus, if people are nationalistic, politics should have the goal of satisfying this preference, regardless of the inegalitarian consequences; just as, if people are consumerists, politics should have the goal of providing them with ever more disposable income. The obvious difficulty with this form of utilitarianism is that the satisfaction of people's preferences may in reality leave them *unhappy*. For liberal nationalists, there are at least two additional problems. First, satisfying the preferences of the members of a given nation-state may produce "externalities," such as the poverty and warfare visited on those outside a given nation-state in order to satisfy its members' preferences. Second, if preference satisfaction is the goal, it would seem to demand that we allow people who do *not* feel the tug of national identity to secede from the nation-state and stop paying taxes to it—just as liberal nationalism requires allowing "peoples" of noncosmopolitan bent to secede, as it were, from world society.

A truly eudaimonistic approach to nationalism would have to be prepared to evaluate people's affiliative preferences more critically, based on whether their satisfaction actually leads, on balance, to more happiness than would their frustration—or to more happiness than could be achieved through nonnationalist forms of affiliation. We would be miserable if we could not treat our friends, spouses, and siblings with special consideration; but is this necessarily true of our conationals? The answer must draw on human psychology. Martin Tyrrell's discussion below of the psychology of nationalism suggests there there is an innate human tendency to identify with those who have been designated as members of one's group, no matter

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how arbitrary the group's definition. Because this tendency is so undiscriminating, it is understandable that the modern individual would find her primary group attachment in her nationality. For one thing, as Gellner in particular emphasized, nationalism homogenizes cultures, making conationals seem similar and congenial. For another, as Tyrrell suggests, the nation-state's growing entanglement with everyday life multiplies the occasions for our identification with it, and, thus with our conationals. The upshot of these considerations, however, is that instead of manifesting itself necessarily in nationalism, with all its attendant dangers, our tendency toward group identification might be satisfied through harmless and even beneficent means, such as cheering for hometown sports teams or participating in local community life, if the powers of the nation-state were reduced. Indeed, it is possible that one of the causes of the decline of community participation is the substitution of the nation-state for the locality as the primary locus of our feelings of group attachment—a topic touched on in these pages by Nicholas Xenos.

A critical eudaimonistic approach to nationalism, then, seems to lead to close scrutiny of the link between "the nation"—i.e., the primary locus of group identification—and the state. Such scrutiny also allows us to recognize, and perhaps explain, the importance of geography in national loyalties. A state is defined by its geographical boundaries, within which it is sovereign. Tilly underscores the military developments, and the consequent financial pressures, that transformed premodern states that were at best semi-sovereign into unmediated rulers of everyone within their borders. This created both the means and the motive for states to cultivate nationalism through campaigns of cultural homogenization, whereby the mutual identification of all of those living within the state's borders was encouraged. These campaigns might propagate the myth that the state's subjects were united either by ethnic ancestry or by free adherence to a civic creed, but the effect of either myth would be to implant in the individual an identification with conationals as the primary in-group.

What is missing from this account, however, is an explanation for people's identification of their primary in-group, the nation, with the state. This makes Greenfeld's story of the rise of nationalism on wings of egalitarianism and popular sovereignty indispensable. In trying to sustain the exactions of the newly sovereign state, the "armies of propagandists on the hoof" discussed by Weber and

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Tilly—the teachers and state employees, not to mention journalists, politicians, and nationalist intellectuals—would have gained great assistance from the notion that the individual members of the nation were, in fact, sovereign, such that the state's exactions were self-imposed. At the same time, the egalitarianism inherent in conferring sovereignty on a "people" would buttress conationals' identification with each other.

The views of Greenfeld, Weber, and Tilly also seem compatible with the modified Gellnerian theory of nationalism suggested by Damian Tambini's article below. Like Tilly and Weber, Gellner emphasizes the culturally homogenizing effects of nationalism; but then, by stressing the advantages cultural homogeneity provides for industrial economies, he suggests that nationalism should be attributed to economic drives. As Tambini points out, this view faces both historical and theoretical problems. Both types of problem, though, might be remedied if we were to see early modern state-building, and the ideas of egalitarianism and popular sovereignty, as providing the sinews of nascent nationalism and of statism; if we were to recognize these political and cultural variables as mutually reinforcing; and if we were to view the resulting form of nationalism as only fortuitously a lubricant of industrial development, rather than industrialization being the driving force behind nationalism.

Such a synthesis has the advantage of allowing for a recognition of the vital role of nationalism in calling forth egalitarian politics within the borders of the nation-state, but without succumbing to the liberal nationalist temptation to view this role as morally self-validating. A page or two from public opinion scholarship might prove helpful here. Over the past three decades and more, it has been widely acknowledged and repeatedly demonstrated by public-opinion researchers that most members of mass electorates make momentous voting decisions on the basis of the flimsiest knowledge of the issues at stake.[5] Given the endless information that would be needed to master merely the most important involvements of the modern state, electors face the choice between confused guesswork and confident dogmatism (i.e., ideology) (cf. Converse 1964). All modern democracies subsist on the myth that the electorate "deliberates," such that its decisions are something more elevated than sheer acts of will or the random rotation of elites, but in truth electoral decisions are guided by crude substitutes for the detailed knowledge true deliberation would require. A shaky grasp

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of economic trends, a vague impression of class interests, a television commercial, or a doctrinaire ideological affinity usually determines one's vote, but more basic than all of these shortcuts through the complexities of politics is nationalism. The one thing most citizens "know" is that the state should be measured by its ability to help "us," the nation. Identification with the nation-state is thus the surest guidepost available to most voters, and is indeed what makes them willing to redistribute income to "their own" poor.

This group identification, precisely by virtue of being the dominant form of modern self-understanding and the central organizing principle of modern politics, deserves critical scrutiny and philosophical skepticism, not complacent affirmation. For either its essential egalitarianism is sound, but the borders between nation-states violate the conclusions to which it should lead; or equality can be sacrificed to utility, in which case the constrained egalitarianism of the nation-state, too, might be dispensable. While the studies published in this issue suggest that the bounded egalitarianism of existing liberal states is the result of deep-rooted political processes, accepting this result as consistent with liberalism may mean falling victim to the power of nationalism to sanctify the morally arbitrary.

NOTES

1. See Friedman 1994 for substantiation.
2. See ibid.
3. See in particular Walzer 1983; Taylor 1985; Taylor 1995, ch. 10; and Sandel 1982, esp. 96 and 149.
4. Miller (1995, 36) goes so far as to defend the propagation of nationalist falsehoods, such as myths of glorious national origin, so long as they "contribute significantly to the support of valuable social relations" (cf. ibid., 184).
5. See Friedman 1996 for some of the evidence.

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Liah Greenfeld

THE MODERN RELIGION?

ABSTRACT: *Nationalism is an essentially secular form of consciousness, one that, indeed, sacralizes the secular. This renders the temptation to treat it as a religion problematic. The framework of individual and collective identities in modern societies, nationalism both obscures the importance of the transcendental concerns that lie at the core of great religions and undermines their authority. Though instrumental in the development of nationalism, religion now exists on its sufferance and serves mainly as a tool for the promotion of nationalist ends, not vice versa.*

To say that nationalism is the modern religion has become a cliche.[1] The intention behind the image is, no doubt, a better understanding of nationalism, but it may be as much a source of a further confusion as of enlightenment in regard to this phenomenon, which is baffling enough as it is. Even a vague understanding of religion as "the bond that binds the soul of man to God" (Lactanius, *Inst. Div.* 4:28, quoted in Burn 1911, 327) should preclude the use of the concept as a description of nationalism. And any heuristic value of analogies between nationalism and religion depends on the formulation of a precise definition of religion, which those most attracted to analogical reasoning are, as a rule, least qualified to attempt.

When we liken nationalism to a religion, more often than not we

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specifically wish to point out some important similarities between it and Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, all of which presuppose a belief in a creative intelligence—and source of meaning—behind the universe. Nationalism emphatically lacks this transcendental orientation, however. It is focused on this world, perceiving it as autonomous and ultimately meaningful in its own right. In this sense, it is essentially secular and is more usefully conceptualized as a species of political ideology (with "political" understood to encompass the multiple and heterogeneous facets of human association).

It is also misleading to use the metaphor of nationalism as *a* religion. Neither religion nor nationalism is uniform. Rather, nationalism should be compared to a *type* of religion, such as monotheism, representing as it does a set of fundamental principles that can be realized in a variety of dissimilar and often incompatible doctrinal systems. Within monotheism one finds particular religions as different as Christianity and Islam; similarly, one finds within nationalism different specific nationalisms, such as the American variety, which is individualistic and civic, and the Russian variant, which is collectivistic and ethnic.

The Human Condition, Religion, and Society

At the same time, nationalism shares with transcendental religions certain central qualities that make it their functional equivalent. Both essentially secular nationalism and the transcendental religions are ways to interpret—that is, invest with meaning—otherwise meaningless reality, providing prisms through which it may be perceived and seen as ordered. Both nationalism and religion are order-creating cultural systems. Though the images of social order they imply are different and are created in different ways, they belong to the same general category of sociological phenomena.[2]

Like great religions before it, nationalism today forms the framework of the type of identity characteristic of the age; indeed, it has replaced religion as the basis of individual and collective identity in the modern world.

No human group of any duration and no human being, unless severely handicapped or as yet undeveloped mentally (as in early infancy), exists without an identity; having an identity appears to be a psychological imperative and thus a sociological constant. But if the

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development of some identity is inevitable, the emergence and ascendancy of a particular kind of identity—for example, of a *national* versus a *religious* identity—is always, at root, a matter of historical contingency. There is nothing in human nature, and therefore in society in general, that makes any specific identity necessary.

An identity defines a person's—and a group's—position in the social world; it carries the set of expectations that its bearer, whether an individual or a collectivity, can legitimately have, orienting the actions of the bearer by defining what can be legitimately expected of it. The least specialized type of identity, the one believed to define the bearer's very essence, shapes behavior in a wide variety of social contexts and reflects, by containing in microcosm, the image of social order or the *social consciousness*[3] of the given society. In the modern world, national identity, much more than any other, has been such a generalized identity. Its framework, nationalism, thus has been the framework of the modern social consciousness. It was religion, by contrast, that formed the framework of social consciousness in the premodern world; nationalism has replaced religion as the main cultural mechanism of social integration. But though on this (sociologically crucial) level, religion and nationalism are functionally equivalent, they differ in virtually all other important respects, and inattention to these differences obscures the nature of nationalism.

For example, since the transcendental religions to which nationalism is sometimes compared held out the promise of eternal life, it is maintained that nationalism, for all its this-worldly orientation, must proffer similar guarantees; otherwise, why would people die for their nations? This common belief (explicitly formulated in the scholarly literature by Benedict Anderson [1991, 9–12][4]) is based on a peculiarly modern assumption, with the help of which today's social scientists—every bit the children of their secular, national age—try to make sense of the *religious* civilization of the past, which is fundamentally alien to them. This is the assumption that religion, at its root, is an attempt to cope with death: "The great merit of traditional world-views," Anderson writes,

> has been their concern with man-in-the-cosmos, man as species being, and the contingency of life. The extraordinary survival over thousands years of Buddhism, Christianity or Islam in dozens of different social formations attests to their imaginative response to the

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> overwhelming burden of human suffering—disease, mutilation, grief, age, and death. . . . At the same time, in different ways, religious thought also responds to obscure intimations of immortality, generally by transforming fatality into continuity. (Anderson 1991, 10-11)

In other words, religion promises endless existence and helps men to adjust to the inescapable discomforts of physical decomposition.

Apart from the brief shining moments of composition, physical decomposition is indeed the way of our bodily life. But reducing human suffering to our bodily experiences is naive. Most of the experiences that drive people to distraction—making them curse the day they were born and wish they were dead, or turning them into suicides, murderers, revolutionaries—have to do with people's relationships with others. The nature of most suffering is social, not physical; it is caused by rejection, humiliation, betrayal, shame, and social disorientation—that is, the proverbial *anomie*—not by aging or mortality. If people's actions are any indication of their obsessions, they are, on the whole, far more preoccupied with injustice than with death. It is the ability of religions (and nationalisms) to justify otherwise distressing *social* arrangements, to create a sense of a just social order, and to make *social* suffering sufferable (Geertz 1973, 104) that explains its endurance over time.

The promise of immortality in great transcendental religions is an implication of their very transcendentalism: the world they envision is larger than this world, and their view of life, by definition, transcends the boundaries of physical existence. Explaining this promise as an answer to a universal need is, therefore, superfluous. For all we know, this promise, at least in Christianity, might well make believers dread death more rather than less, for beyond it rage the fires of hell. Eternal damnation, for which most of us would feel more eligible than for its alternative, is surely at least as grim a prospect as natural annihilation, and the more squeamish may well find the latter preferable and count it a blessing. The particular anguish of early Protestants may be beyond the powers of the modern mind to imagine; still, the idea of predestination makes one shudder. It could be in part because religion of this sort made the thought of death absolutely unbearable that Protestant societies were the first to dim their religious enthusiasms and opt for visions of reality limited to the confines of this world, which presupposed the finitude of life.[5]

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Nationalism's secular focus, which makes it unlike religion, paradoxically explains why the effects it produces on human psyche and behavior are often so similar. The perception of the mundane as meaningful in its own right implies its sacralization. With nationalism, the heavens, so to speak, descend to earth; this world, the world of empirical reality and social relations, becomes the sphere of the sacred. Unlike the need for immortality, the need for meaning is universal; proximity to the perceived sources of ultimate meaning takes our breath away. Nationalism provides countless opportunities for such perception in the routines of quotidian activity, business, parenting, and neighborly association, which to the religious mentality are the very strongholds of the profane. It is this uniquely modern sacralization of the secular through the experience of national identity that moved Durkheim to declare that God is society (Durkheim 1995, 351), and that Shils (1975) referred to when he spoke of the penetration of the center into the periphery.[6]

The perception of this world as ultimately meaningful—its investment with the creative powers and authority that the great religions were willing to recognize only in the mysterious beyond—makes our everyday existence, contrary to the Romantic deprecation of modernity as soulless and materialistic, far more intensely spiritual than that of any of the prenational social formations. Within the framework of nationalism, society is saturated with spirituality; it is no longer dead matter, a physical addendum to the soul or a temporary shell for it, subject to rot and decomposition; it is the soul itself. If religion were identical with spirituality, then nationalism would truly be the modern religion and more of a religion, at that, than any we have known before.

It is no coincidence that the age of nationalism is also the age of science. The nationalist enchantment of the world is reflected in the apotheosis of the means of knowing the world. Science is expected to penetrate the world's mysteries, harness its powers, and uncover its meaning. It is forced to take the place of theology. But society is God (*pace* Durkheim) only if we make it so; the meaning of the world is not simply there to be uncovered.

Nationalism, Church, and State

The investment of the political sphere, specifically, with the signifi-

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cance of the sacred creates the characteristic modern problem that, in the Christian context—the original context of nationalism—was conceptualized as the relationship between Church and State. This relationship is problematic because it is conceived of—from the time it was conceived of at all—as a conflict between two *autonomous* realms of the sacred that are irreconcilable in principle. The Church-State problem reflects the temporary coexistence of two incommensurable images of order, each claiming absolute truth—a product of the birth of nationalism. This conflict has been resolved, partly, through agreements of mutual noninterference and the confinement of religion and nationalism to separate spheres, but more generally through the eventually indisputable ascendancy of the secular domain. Both this "solution" and the problem itself are inconceivable in any prenational society.

Even civilizations that resemble modern nations in some important respects—such as ancient Israel on the one hand and, on the other, classical antiquity,[7] with its veneration of the polis and profound sense of civic duty, from which we learned the meaning of patriotism—could not imagine the political as independent from, much less superior to, religion. The political realm was a part of a larger world and derived its meaning from a wider context. The world in which the ancient Israelites, Greeks, and Romans lived embodied a higher reality that transcended it. It was ruled by agents of a different order, and though, in the latter cases, gods dwelt in the polis—the only place where mortal men could be in their proximity and thus lead a meaningful existence—the sacred did not emanate from the mundane.[8]

Classical antiquity, the cradle of our political philosophy, lacked the concept of the "state"; it had no use for it. Neither did medieval Christianity. The Kingdom of the Lord was not of this world, and this made kingdoms of this world (even as they grew increasingly assertive vis-à-vis the authority of the popes, and resentful of the privileged position the papacy arrogated to itself in the cosmic order) pale in comparison with the shining transcendental ideal to the realization of which they each at various times claimed to be called and especially dedicated. The "ruling bodies" had their place in the providential scheme, for they were "from God" (Romans 13:1–4). But the spirit that animated them was the spirit of transcendental faith; their legitimacy was derived from unearthly sources; and the Christian communities for whose "own good," in

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Paul's words, they were established, were churches in the sense that they were constituted by that special bond that bound the soul of each of its members to their savior.

In cases where a polity (rather than a family, an estate, a locality) developed a clear sense of identity, as happened in France—the most striking example of such development—this identity reflected consciousness of its distinct religious profession, to which all the other unique characteristics that the polity in question might have (peculiarities of language, climate, or social structure) were, without doubt, considered secondary. Religious identity was paramount in the Middle Ages, defining each believer's place in a transcendental order vastly superior—in its expanse as well as significance—to the vale of tears where one was tested, the sad little antechamber to the real and eternal life. For this reason, unless set off from the rest of *respublica Christiana* by the virtues of their religious vocation, the territorial units of that great body failed to develop a sufficient sense of separate political identity. Their denizens were, above all else, Christians, and their consciousness of community with other Christians transcended such differences of language and feudal loyalty as might split Christendom and pit one part of it against the rest. (The martyrdom of Sir Thomas More furnishes an eloquent, and very late, example of this profoundly religious consciousness.) Feudal, dynastic conflicts were settled like family disputes, the violence used in their settlement throwing little doubt on the bond that united the opponents. Only when cast in religious terms, and therefore experienced as religious wars, did conflicts lead to the perception of the opponents as eternal enemies and thus become, in effect, irreconcilable. Such was the Hundred Years' War, which pitted against each other the two branches of one particularly powerful feudal family, the French branch perceiving their English cousins as the agents of the Antichrist and themselves as the representatives of God (see Citron 1987, 131).

The problem of Church and State did not exist in the Middle Ages because the State did not exist. The temporal powers of these earlier times were not states in the modern understanding of the word. The concept of the "state" in this sense, the concept that lies at the foundation of the *reality* of the modern state, developed late, following the emergence of national consciousness, which called it forth by implying the existence of an independent secular political sphere. The subsequent rise of the State vis-à-vis the Church,

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which found early expression in the novel interpretation of the concept of "empire" and its application, in particular, to France and England, reflected the increasing preeminence of this sphere. Somewhat later, already in the dramatically altered conditions of post-Reformation Europe, this preeminence of the secular was recognized in the well-known formulation of the Peace of Westphalia.

The Demotion of Religion

The damage to the unity of the Western Church caused by the Reformation was irreparable, and the forced toleration of contradictory notions about the matter of supreme importance inevitably diminished religion. Thus secularization must be traced back to that last heroic burst of religious energy in the history of Christianity. At the same time, this momentous trend, which was to reduce the central issue of man's eternal salvation to the relatively inconsequential and marginal sphere of lifestyle, did not result solely or even chiefly from inner religious developments and schisms. Its independent sources were the same ones that nourished nascent nationalism, and nationalism itself eventually emerged as the most important factor in its growth.

The *functional* equivalence of nationalism and religion has led many observers to infer that nationalism was called into being by the prior disappearance of the religious spirit. Secularization, it is claimed, left certain essential human needs unfulfilled and made nationalism—the substitute religion—necessary (Anderson 1991, 11). (The assumption of the death-defying capacities and preoccupations of nationalism is but an elaboration of this common theme.) Such an inference, however, is erroneous. The fact that nationalism replaced religion as the order-creating system, substituting the social and political relations between men for the bond between man and God as that which gives meaning to life, implies nothing at all about the historical connection between them and lends no justification to the kind of sociological teleology that is the essence of such reasoning.

The varied and complex history of the relationship between nationalism and religion cannot be narrowed to a linear sequence. Though a product of independent developments, nationalism emerged in a world seething with religious enthusiasms. The coin-

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cidence of its birth in England, where it first appeared, with the separation of the English Church from Rome assured the new arrival support from English Protestantism, which not only protected nationalism from suspicion when its own authority was yet uncertain, but also reinforced some of its more radical claims (see Greenfeld 1992, 51–58, 61–66, 77).

The twin core principles of nationalism were (and remain) popular sovereignty and the fundamental equality of those defined as members of the nation. The definition of England as an empire, which rendered the separation from Rome legitimate and all attempts at interference on the latter's part insufferable, carved out a sphere of operation for the principle of popular sovereignty and perforce strengthened it. Meanwhile, the Protestant maxim of the priesthood of all believers, which under the circumstances had special significance, confirmed and entrenched the principle of equality. This maxim implied, among other things, a closer attention to God's Word; believers were encouraged to familiarize themselves with it, and the Bible was, indeed, very widely read.

The text of the Old Testament, in particular, appeared to offer an ideal of an elect nation for neophyte nationalists to model themselves on, and so fostered national sentiment as much as godliness (Greenfeld 1992, 52–54). The translators of the English Bible read this nationalist message in the sacred script very clearly and had no qualms about clarifying it for the benefit of their readers when the Author's phrasing seemed obscure. The brief and intense Marian interlude, offensive to religious and national sensibilities alike, forged an even closer alliance between religion and nationalism, bringing about a virtual identification of the Protestant and national causes. Indeed, in England's definition as a "Protestant nation," the noun and the adjective, for a while, were assigned equal weight. Whoever belonged to the Church, said Hooker, belonged to the Commonwealth (Hooker 1970, 3:330). The nation was a sovereign earthly community, itself the source of law and meaning, and yet it was divinely ordained and fulfilled a providential purpose.

This symbiosis was short lived in England and only rarely observed elsewhere. The secularization of English society was advanced and explicit by the time of the Restoration: the sacred was firmly installed in this world and, only years after the so-called Puritan Rebellion, the transcendental ardor that had burned in the hearts of its combatants appeared both incomprehensible and de-

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plorable. Puritan preaching came to be accused of lulling men's minds with otherworldly imagery. Thomas Sprat, a divine of modern persuasion in more than one sense of the word, proposed the language of mathematics as a substitute (Sprat 1667, 111; also see Jones 1952). "Impartial philosophers" at the Royal Society, animated by the new and vigorous secular spirit, dedicated themselves to the study of the empirical reality, for the greatness of England at least as much as the glory of God; religion, formerly the standard of judgment, was praised or censured in accordance with the degree to which it agreed with the genius of the nation and its interest (Greenfeld 1992, 78–87).

Yet, though no longer a governing passion, religion in English society was kept on decent terms and treated with respect. It was displaced and relegated to its cloistered, private existence quietly, without undue show of emotion. The relationship between nationalism and religion in France was far more turbulent. This corresponded to the fiery Latin temperament, but had to do chiefly neither with it nor with the fact that the religion in question was Catholicism, but, as in England, with the nature of French nationalism and the circumstances of its birth.

French national identity was third in the line of fully developed *French* identities, the first two of which were in one way or another inspired by religion. The earliest of these two existed between the twelfth and the first half of the sixteenth centuries and was, as already mentioned, essentially religious. "France" was perceived as a distinctly Christian, Catholic community, that is as a Church, whose uniqueness lay in the purity and intensity of its faith (Greenfeld 1992, 91–98). While medieval kingship everywhere had an implication of divine appointment, in the case of the French kings this idea carried particular weight and was conceived of in terms of an immediate connection, a direct link between the Lord of Creation and the French royal family. The Vicars of Christ in Rome early on recognized the French kings as the eldest sons of the (Western) Church and acquiesced to their claim to the title of *très chrétien*. Since the French king enjoyed particular favor with the King above, and since through the blood of the royal lineage this favor was communicated to all who were subject to his authority, French Catholicism soon acquired qualities other than its exceptional purity to distinguish it from the Catholicism of the rest, and became unique in more than its degree. The cult of Christ was joined to

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the cult of the French royalty, *la religion royale*, and the union of the two was most poignantly symbolized in the royal lily, which was also the emblem of the Mother of God (see Beaune 1985).

Purity of faith, however, remained for some time the most heralded characteristic of the French creed and the one on which the French sense of uniqueness most depended. Consequently, heresy was an object of particular abhorrence and the visible inroads it made in France in the sixteenth century were bound to provoke a crisis of identity. The disorientation produced in men's minds by the undeniable presence of what had been thought impossible was aggravated by the fact that the legitimate heir to the French throne, the very link between France and the heavens and the only vessel in which God would appear in those parts, was himself a heretic and the leader of heretics. Whatever the outcome of the religious wars that ensued, being French could no longer have the same meaning. An essential part of French identity had to be given up: it had to be redefined either at the expense of attenuating (i.e., denying the intensity and accepting the impurity of) its Catholicism, or at the expense of its devotion to the royal cult—precisely the features that made France a Church in its own right.

In a country devastated by 40 years of internecine strife, the desire for order here and now prevailed over considerations of a transcendental nature that could have no such immediate effect. Nominally as Catholic as ever, France inconspicuously but drastically modified its religion. The community was still that of believers, constituted as a Church by the bond between each of them and their God, but this God was now the king. The principle of divine right theory, which formed the conceptual foundation of French royal absolutism, was *Tout Roy de la terre est Dieu* (Du Rivault, quoted in Church 1941, 309). The authority of the king was sanctioned directly by an impersonal, abstract transcendental force, of which he was the earthly incarnation. Thus the deification of the king preserved the transcendental nature of the French identity and faith, but it also represented a tremendous step in the direction of its secularization. One foot of the sacred, at least, was now firmly planted on earth. It was left to nationalism to accomplish its transplantation by transferring the rest.

The contribution of French religious identities to the formation of French national identity was limited. Their influence may be discerned in the character of the French concept of "the state." This

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concept evolved out of the idea of royal authority, perceived, especially under the premises of divine right theory, as ultimately sacred, incontestable, indivisible, and the source of all law. This authority was believed to be constitutive of the polity; it was the spirit that animated the territory and the community that were subject to it. The concept of "the state," which from a certain point on applied to the spirit and the body alike and eventually became a preferred term for the polity, retained, in this new employment, the features of its former usage. Later, when it became the synonym of "the nation," it communicated to the latter its abstract and authoritarian quality (Greenfeld 1992, 91–188 *passim*).

As a result—though, by and large, the growth of French nationalism was stimulated by factors unrelated to religion—the new secular identity inherited the absolutism of its religious predecessors. It also—necessarily—inherited their ardent character. And being both ardent and absolutist, the "jealous"[9] French nation would not suffer a rival authority within what it defined as its own domain. The separation of church and state in France was, from the first, a euphemism. In the United States, "the wall of separation" prevented the various churches from interfering in the secular government, but in turn protected them from interference within wide areas of private life, including education, allowing them considerable scope of activity. In France, by contrast, separation in effect meant the dispossession of the church of all influence and the expurgation of its very spirit from the social body. *La religion civile* (the concept in which the idea of nationalism as a religion probably has its origin) had as little tolerance for heresy as the Catholicism of medieval France, which prided itself on its purity. And while the claims of the (all-encompassing) secular and transcendental images of reality are mutually exclusive and by definition cannot be fully and consciously adhered to at the same time, in France this contradiction was made explicit, ruling out not only true reconciliation, which is nowhere possible, but even pragmatic compromise and the pretense of civility, practiced elsewhere with some success. But nations are composite entities in which perfect spiritual accord is unattainable, even when they are defined, as in France, in unitary terms. In the course of French national history, elements of the previous identities of France were now and again reasserted, making religion repeatedly a presence in national life.

This sketchy presentation of a very complex issue may be suffi-

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cient as a demonstration of the variability of the relationship between nationalism and religion. The nature of the particular religion in question shaped this relationship only to the extent that it influenced the nature of the emerging nationalism, and in the measure allowed by the circumstances of this emergence. In the German case, unlike in England, nationalism was born three full centuries after the Reformation, which made the role of the latter as a stimulant and catalyst of this development negligible; but an indigenous adaptation of Protestant principles, Pietism, was responsible for the conceptual and emotional framework of German national consciousness. In both Poland and Ireland, in distinction to France, Catholicism formed the central element of the national—secular—identity. An examination of Orthodox Christianity, of varieties of Islam, of Judaism, and of other great religious traditions in their interaction with nationalism, might reveal additional patterns. But whatever the original character of a nationalism and of the religion that it replaced, this replacement, the ascendancy of the one and the unseating of the other, was always the outcome. Even where religion was a crucial factor in the development of nationalism and a source of its initial legitimacy (which, insofar as nationalism in general is concerned, was precisely the case), even where it played midwife at the birth of nationalism and protected it in its infancy, religion was reduced to the role of a handmaiden, an occasionally used tool, and came to exist on nationalism's sufferance.

"Religious" Nationalism

The phenomenon of religious nationalism, so salient today and, on the face of it, paradoxical, can be understood only in light of this transformation in the relative positions of nationalism and religion. Religious nationalisms do not constitute a separate type of nationalism, which can be distinguished from other types by the ways of thinking and behavioral propensities they inspire; little can be achieved by classifying nationalism in any particular case in this way. What needs to be kept in mind is that the nature of a nationalism is never determined by the religious context in which it may grow, and though often affected by this context to an extent, it is ultimately defined by the constraints of the immediate situations faced by the social groups actively involved in the formation of the

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national consciousness. These constraints are emphatically secular. They are generated not by the exigencies of salvation and the responsibility before his Creator that each man must meet alone, but by the tensions in men's social relations, which agitate peculiarly social passions and anxieties—status anxiety, the concern for dignity, recognition, and one's place among others—all that, in short, which religion dismisses as vanity.

Responses produced by these constraints may in turn lead to three types of nationalism. These types are distinguished along two dimensions, in accordance with the manner in which they define the nation and the criteria of membership in it that they favor.

There are two fundamental possibilities for the definition of the nation: it can be defined either as a composite entity, a collectivity formed by the association of individuals; or in unitary terms, as a collective individual.[10] The choice between these possibilities is of the utmost consequence for the social, political, and even economic character of the nation, for the two create the conditions for, and directly encourage the formation of, very different cultural patterns and institutions.

The definition of the nation as a composite entity, as was the case with the original nationalism, in England and those other societies that adopted the English model, assumes the moral and political primacy of the human individual, who is seen not simply as a physical unit of society, but as its constitutive element, in the sense that all the qualities of the latter have their source in the nature of the former. The nation—which, in the framework of nationalism in general, is seen as a sovereign (fully independent and self-governing) community of fundamentally equal members—in the framework of this composite definition derives its freedom from the essential liberty of the individuals who compose it; while its dignity, and the dignity of national identity, reflects the natural dignity of each human being. Such dignity and liberty (which are, of course, inherently linked) make the members of the nation equal, and this equality is realized in the social and political arrangements that set individualistic nations apart from others. The principles at the foundation of individualistic nationalisms are none other than the principles of liberal democracy, which individualistic national consciousness fosters and sustains.

The definition of the nation in unitary terms, by contrast, promotes collectivist forms of social and political organization, which,

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whether named "communism," "socialism" of one kind or another, or "socialist" and/or "popular" democracy, share in common a predilection for authoritarian politics and, as a result, pronounced inequality in social life, at least in the relationship between the rulers and the ruled. This authoritarianism is a logical implication of perceiving the community as an individual in its own right—and one morally superior to human individuals—with a will, interests, and purpose of its own, which have priority over and are independent of human wishes and aspirations. These are not directly known to the members of the community and have to be deciphered and interpreted for their benefit by a specially qualified elite. This all-important service gives new meaning to the concept of representation: the elite, in such cases, represents the nation to the people, rather than representing the people. This service also establishes those who provide it in a position of vast superiority to the rest. The equality of membership that is implied in nationalism is contradicted by this superiority and is, therefore, reinterpreted and limited, becoming in the political sphere a matter of make-believe.

The other implication of nationalism, popular sovereignty, is also reinterpreted, becoming the attribute of the nation as separate from the people who compose it, and, as such, lying not in political arrangements that ensure individual liberties, but in collective freedom from foreign domination. Finally, the dignity of the nation, and of national identity, is, in the framework of collectivistic nationalisms, no longer a reflection of the dignity of individuals, but is instead inherent in the nation as such and is only communicated to individuals by virtue of their membership in the nation.

The criteria of membership may be either civic or ethnic. In the former case, nationality is equated with citizenship and is seen as an essentially political and even legal category, implying a commitment to certain rights and duties; a commitment that is, in principle, embraced voluntarily. Being, at least theoretically, a matter of choice, it can be acquired and lost. Though it is presumed that every person at any point in time has a nationality, and that their choice is limited to selecting among various national identities, it is conceivable, in the framework of civic nationalism, that one could be without a nationality altogether. When nationality is defined in ethnic terms, by contrast, it is no longer a matter of choice, but is instead an ineluctable, biological necessity. One cannot be without a nationality,

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as one cannot be without a heart or a liver, and indeed it is somewhere around the heart and the liver that one has to look for the source of national identity, for nationality is believed to be an inherent, genetic characteristic. It runs in families, it is transmitted by blood. One is born into a particular nationality and can never lose or change one's identity; at best (or at worst) it can be concealed. One's nationality determines one's interests and sentiments and is expected to project itself naturally in one's sense of attachment and commitment to the nation. Conduct that fails to answer such expectations is perceived as unnatural and perverse, and provokes reactions of extreme revulsion and condemnation.

The two dimensions result in three types of nationalism, because the composite definition of the nation, with its emphasis on the logical and moral supremacy of the individual, implies a civic concept of nationality; consequently, individualistic nationalism is necessarily civic. The definition of the nation in unitary terms, however, is commensurate with both civic and ethnic criteria of membership, allowing for the existence of civic and ethnic varieties of collectivistic nationalism.

Whether the criteria adopted are civic or ethnic depends on the nature of the characteristics believed to constitute the nation's uniqueness or individuality. When these characteristics are cultural or political, which is likely to reflect a sense of cultural or political confidence and even superiority, as in France, nationality is defined in civic terms; ethnic nationalism, by contrast, is usually rooted in a deep sense of inferiority, which induces the belief that the nation's uniqueness is to be sought in its essence, rather than its achievement, and leads nationalists to emphasize inner qualities that are in little danger of scrutiny by outsiders.

The components of individualistic and civic nationalism, on the one hand, and of collectivistic and ethnic nationalism, on the other, reinforce each other, and bolster the liberal tendencies of the former and the authoritarian proclivities of the latter. But the combination of a collectivistic definition of the nation with civic criteria of nationality unites these contradictory propensities and creates an ambivalent and inherently problematic type.

The individualistic perception of the group as essentially composite and shaped by its members has as its corollaries a pluralistic notion of the national community and an emphasis on constitutional provisions and institutions that ensure this pluralism. Upon

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such provisions and institutions—which make each of these pluralities one—individualistic nations pride themselves the most. It is what they believe to be most distinctive about themselves. To these safeguards of their individualism all other characteristics that members of the nation may share, such as language, territory, physical type, history, and religion (if indeed they do share these characteristics), are secondary, and are unlikely to be perceived as foundations of national identity and consciousness. The very individualism of individualistic nationalisms precludes their perception in terms of group attributes, such as religion; and so, unless it is used in very special circumstances and is very heavily qualified (as in the case of fledgling sixteenth-century English nationalism), the term "religious nationalism" is, in their case, meaningless.

It is not surprising, therefore, that most nationalisms that with any justification may be called "religious" belong to the collectivistic type. On the face of it, the perception of religion as the central characteristic of a nation, and as the basis of its uniqueness, presupposes civic criteria of national membership. Religious traditions that admit of conversion and attach great significance to apostasy make community membership a matter of individual choice and responsibility. One can gain admittance to a religiously based nationality and forfeit it on the force of one's religious affiliation; the expectations of a religious nationalism in this respect are not substantially different from the expectations of any civic nationalism—membership ultimately being, in every nationalism of this type, a function of conviction.

The foundation of an essentially secular identity on a transcendental allegiance, however, contributes an additional strain to the inherently problematic experience of collectivistic and civic nationalisms. The recurrent debates over the question *Mi hu ihudi?* (*Who is to be considered a Jew?*) that have vexed many an Israeli patriot and plagued the relations between various sectors of Israeli society since the founding of the state exemplify the tensions generated by this inconsistency (see Eisenstadt 1967, 368–90). This secular state has repeatedly demonstrated its inability to cope with the apostasy of its citizens, whether through conversion to another faith or declared atheism, despite the extension of citizenship rights to Gentile descendants of Jews about whom no such misdemeanor is reported (no questions being asked on the subject). This inability, along with the violent reaction to civil disobedience on the part of religious

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groups, testifies to the conflicted character of an identity that tries to combine, and requires loyalty to, two mutually exclusive sets of ideals. Still, the seriousness of this attempt (doomed to fail as it is), the sincerity of the religious commitment on the part of the secular body politic, ensures the civic nature of the national identity and keeps the nation, in principle, open.

Most nationalisms that we may readily call "religious" today imply no such religious seriousness. The committed adherents of such nationalisms habitually show a most unabashed disregard for the commandments of the faith that professedly constitutes their identity, blithely contradicting its principles and consistently disobeying its law. They do not necessarily do so on purpose or in full consciousness of the religious significance of their acts, because they may not be fully conscious of the substance of their religion, and though observant of its rituals, they cannot be properly considered believers. Where they still exist at all, their religious beliefs are probably vague, religion being no longer the expression of revealed truth and inner personal conviction, but an outward sign and symbol of their collective distinctness. In "religious" nationalisms religion is likely to be the most important distinction, sometimes the only one, differentiating a self-conscious group from others in its vicinity; this is the case, for example, with Serbian Orthodoxy and Croatian Catholicism.

What is of greater moment is that, when valued chiefly for this external—and mundane—function, religion becomes an ethnic characteristic, an ascriptive, unalterable attribute of a collectivity, and, as such, a reflection of necessity, rather than personal responsibility and choice; that is to say, in the final analysis, a reflection of race. Seeing religion in this light (which could hardly be more foreign to the spirit of religion), as a quality that is transmitted by blood, religious nationalisms are naturally suspicious of converts and are likely to meet with hostility even the most fervent and sincere desire to embrace the principles of their professed religions on the part of those not affiliated with them by right of *national* definition. They see conversion as a cunning attempt to insinuate oneself into the nationality, to "pass" as a member of the nation, thereby concealing one's true nature. Hence they jealously protect the national community from such infiltration by aliens.

The desire to convert, when religion is seen as an ethnic attribute, may indeed be inspired to a great extent by the expectation

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that a change (or, as the case may be, acquisition) of a religious affiliation would afford one an otherwise blocked entry into the secular political community. It is this expectation which, undoubtedly, explains the conversion of large numbers of Russian Jews (most of them atheists of long standing, previously devoid of any religious feeling) to Russian Orthodox Christianity, which has reemerged as one of the central features of Russianness in the wake of the recent political transformations and the reevaluation of the character of Russian national identity as a result of the (temporary) abandonment of Communism and dissolution of the empire. The fallacy of this expectation was attested, among other things, by the vilification and then violent death of one of the most eminent contemporary theologians and leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church—Father Alexander Men', who, for the majority of his worldly-minded coreligionists, supremely confident in their election, could never be but a converted, and therefore deceitful, Jew.

The definition of religion as a racial characteristic may allow the imposition of a religious nationality from the outside in disregard of the group's racial identity, as is the case with the so-called Bosnian Muslims. This unfortunate community, whose self-consciousness is, without question, a product of its recent victimization, is defined, on the initiative of its persecutors, in terms of the religious affiliation of its members' ancestors, because in every other respect, including the general religious indifferentism of the current membership, it is indistinguishable from its hostile neighbors. This indifferentism, however, is of no more consequence than the fact that all the populations concerned come from the same South Slav racial stock, because, as a matter of race (of which, under the circumstances, it is perceived as a paramount expression), religion is transmitted by blood, and presumably carried in one's organism, not unlike a virus, whether one is aware of it or not.

Whether the nascent Bosnian nationalism that, given the disintegration of the common South Slav identity, could have been expected to develop, would, left to itself, have become religious; and, if so, whether it would have become civic or ethnic, is anybody's guess: the potential for the development of a civic nationalism clearly existed, and so did the possibility of a nationalism in which religion would play at most a marginal role (Rieff 1995, 142). It was not left to itself, however, and today it seems far more likely that this nationalism will belong to the ethnic variety. However Bosni-

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ans might have defined themselves, they were defined by others as first and foremost Muslims; consciousness of their religious origins was forced upon them with appalling brutality, and they have been held individually responsible—and made to pay—for the alleged offenses of their communal faith. Denied all other identities, it is only natural that they would embrace the one that was imposed on them and regard as an inherent predilection and an expression of race the forgotten religion that was made the foundation of their destiny. One cannot think without consternation about the irreligious Western world's lack of foresight in consenting to the confessional name-calling with which this murderous ethnogenesis began. This intellectual complacency paved the road to genocide, but, if this were possible, the complicity of enlightened humanity is rendered more grievous by its unwitting—in fact mindless—assistance at the birth of yet another ethnic nationalism.

Because most religious nationalisms are ethnic nationalisms, the fanaticism, the abnegation of self (one's own as well as others') for the sake of the community, which we associate with religious nationalism, are more often than not predicated on the essential worldliness of this complex of sentiments, expressed most tellingly in the inattention to, even ignorance and disregard of, basic religious (transcendental) principles. Insofar as "religious fundamentalism" refers to religious nationalism, it is, therefore, a misnomer and would be more accurate if changed to "religious superficialism." For the value put on the outward function of religion increases the importance of its external symbols as it decreases that of its substance, and the observance of form and ritual gains all the significance lost by the sincerity of belief. The conformity of behavior among members of the community is strictly enforced because it expresses the natural order of things, nothing less than the *Wesenwille* of the race. Nonconformity, likewise, possesses great symbolic significance: it undermines this natural order and for this reason is regarded, as something unnatural and monstrous, with repugnance. The symbolic significance of nonconformity is proportionate to its public character; this may explain the rage against such a literary figure as Salman Rushdie.[11] Never to give a moment of reflection to one's religion is no crime from the perspective of religious nationalism: it sees religion as a manifestation of one's being, not a product of cogitation. But to express skepticism is a cardinal sin; its offense lies in the threat to the cohesion of the collectivity, and, as such, it cannot

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be pardoned. This religious formalism adds to the repressive nature of regimes generated by ethnic nationalism.

The consideration of religious nationalism, whether today or in the past, must take into account the type of profoundly secular loyalty that may be masked (but not materially modified) by its identification with a traditional confessional allegiance. The behavioral propensities of religious nationalisms are the propensities of nationalisms, rather than of the religions with which they are associated, and the only generalizations that are warranted in their regard are those pertaining to the collectivistic, and civic or ethnic, nature of these nationalisms.

The salience of religious nationalisms today should be attributed first of all to the resurgence, or more precisely, the uninhibited manifestation, of national sentiments in general and, in particular, of ethnic nationalism. It does not indicate any change in the nature of modern collective identities. The tendency of so many ethnic, and occasionally even civic, nationalisms to clothe themselves in religious garb, in turn, is a function of the temporary unavailability of obvious ideological alternatives as a result of the collapse of Communism (which for so many ethnic nationalisms was the camouflage of choice for most of the twentieth century), and the consequent disintegration of the entire bipolar conception. The comforts of the Cold War era, with its pleasing simplicity and secure stability (which we learned to appreciate in retrospect), have been brought to an abrupt end; the new world order that replaced *Pax Americana* turns out to be not at all what we expected, given our naive notions of reality, and we feel forced to search for new ways of understanding and organizing it.

But this new world order is not that new, and its bewildering complexity obscures the very same striving, however multifaceted, that has moved humanity for the past several centuries. It is the striving to invest our finite existence with meaning and dignity, a striving exclusively focused on this world and on that most human aspect of our existence in it—society. This striving is intensely spiritual and secular at the same time. Everything is put to use to satisfy it, including the great religions of the past. But their powers, rendered irrelevant by the reigning creed of nationalism, belong to a different, older order indeed and are unequal to the task. Geared to our needs, they are wasted.

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NOTES

1. It is in the nature of a cliché to obliterate, rather than emphasize, the original significance of a concept; for this reason, insisting on the religious character of nationalism no longer appears sufficient. As a result, recently nationalism (specifically, the nation) has been upgraded to the rank of the "God of Modernity" (see Llobera 1994).
2. For a classical statement of the comparative merits of religion and secular ideologies as order-creating cultural systems, see Geertz 1973, 87–125 and 193–234.
3. The concept of "social consciousness" is developed in Ossowski 1963.
4. For a recent reiteration of this position see Smith 1995.
5. "In the place of humble sinners to whom Luther promises grace if they trust themselves to God in penitent faith are bred those self-confident saints whom we can rediscover in the hard Puritan merchants of the heroic age of capitalism and in isolated instances down to the present. On the other hand, in order to attain that self-confidence intense worldly activity is recommended as the most suitable means. It and it alone disperses religious doubts and gives the certainty of peace." Weber 1989, 111–12.
6. See, for example, Shils 1975, 3-16; 304-16; 317-44.
7. On the protonational character of ancient Israel, Greece, and Rome see Kohn 1944, 27-62.
8. On the essentially religious nature of the polis, see Fustel de Coulanges 1980 (1864).
9. An epithet used by Michael Walzer (1989), who refers to the American nation as one that is *not* jealous.
10. This typology was first proposed in Greenfeld 1992, 9-11.
11. The intolerance of nonconformity among the Ayatollah Khomeini's followers explains their willingness to hunt Rushdie down. But a close reading of *The Satanic Verses* suggests that the Ayatollah may have issued the *fatwa* for the pettier reason of personal vanity. The "bearded and turbaned Imam" portrayed as holed up in London is almost certainly a caricature of Khomeini in exile in Paris. See Rushdie 1989, 205-209. For a description of Khomeini in exile, see Parsons 1990, 73.

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Bernard Yack

THE MYTH OF THE CIVIC NATION

ABSTRACT: *The idea of a purely civic nationalism has attracted Western scholars, most of whom rightly disdain the myths that sustain ethnonationalist theories of political community. Civic nationalism is particularly attractive to many Americans, whose peculiar national heritage encourages the delusion that their mutual association is based solely on consciously chosen principles. But this idea misrepresents political reality as surely as the ethnonationalist myths it is designed to combat. And propagating a new political myth is an especially inappropriate way of defending the legacy of Enlightenment liberalism from the dangers posed by the growth of nationalist political passions.*

What kind of community do members of modern nations make the focus of political legitimacy and loyalty? Answering that question has been difficult, especially since the idea of the nation is ordinarily called on to capture two distinct changes in the way modern individuals imagine political community. On the one hand, there is the development of a strong connection between cultural and political identities. On the other hand, there is the new way of imagining community that has developed to parallel the new orga-

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nization of political power by the modern state. By breaking down and integrating local communities and overlapping jurisdictions, state sovereignty has in effect "nationalized" political community. It has taught us to think of those subjected to this new kind of power as members of distinct political communities.

Students of nationalism have generally focused on one or the other of these two momentous changes. The new connections between cultural and political community have received the most attention under the heading of ethnonationalism, the nationalization of political community under the heading of modernization or nation building. Those who look seriously at both changes usually urge us to distinguish them as separate phenomena inspired by two very different visions of the nation. The ethnic idea of the nation, we are told, celebrates inherited cultural identity and is exemplified by Germany, Japan, and most Eastern European countries. The civic idea of the nation, in contrast, is supposed to capture the freely chosen and purely political identity of participants in such modern states as France, Canada, and the United States.

This distinction between ethnic and civic understandings of national community reflects the two ways in which the term nation is used in everyday language: to point to cultural communities of origin and to characterize the political communities that correspond to modern states (as in expressions like the "United Nations"). The distinction also parallels and builds upon a long series of earlier conceptual dichotomies, such as Eastern vs. Western nationalism (Plamenatz 1973), *ethnos* vs. *demos* (Francis 1965), cultural vs. political states (Meinecke 1970), and German vs. French understandings of nationhood (Renan 1990; Dumont 1994). Like all of these earlier dichotomies, the contrast between ethnic and civic nationalism serves both descriptive and normative goals.[1] In other words, it serves both to classify the different forms of nationalism that exist in the modern world and to distinguish the more valuable or acceptable forms of nationalism from their more dangerous counterparts. Distinguishing civic from ethnic understandings of nationhood is part of a larger effort by contemporary liberals to channel national sentiments in a direction—civic nationalism—that seems consistent with the commitments to individual rights and diversity that they associate with a decent political order.

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The Civic/Ethnic Dichotomy

Michael Ignatieff's recent book, *Blood and Belonging*, provides an excellent illustration of this dual use of the distinction between civic and ethnic nations. Ignatieff is a self-professed cosmopolitan—how else, he asks, to describe someone "whose father was born in Russia, whose mother was born in England, whose education was in America, and whose working life has been spent in Canada, Great Britain, and France" (Ignatieff 1993, 11)? But he recognizes that cosmopolitanism is only a viable option for a rather privileged subset of citizens of wealthy industrial societies. And even their security, he admits, rests upon their being able to take nationally defended citizenship rights for granted.

Accordingly, Ignatieff acknowledges that the Enlightenment vision of a cosmopolitan world society of rational individuals, a vision that he shares, cannot be realized, at least in the foreseeable future. Modern individuals seem to need a sense of belonging to a national community to support the very rights and freedom from fear that Enlightenment cosmopolitans strove to create (Ignatieff 1993, 11-13). But the Enlightenment's political legacy, he argues, can only be preserved in a *civic* nation, which Ignatieff conceives of as "a community of equal, rights-bearing citizens, united in patriotic attachment to a shared set of political practices and values." The civic nation, Ignatieff argues, is a community created by the choice of individuals to honor a particular political creed. As such, it is relatively compatible with the Enlightenment legacy of rationalism and individualism, since it turns "national belonging [into] a form of rational attachment." Ethnic nationalism, in contrast, abandons that legacy because it insists "that an individual's deepest attachments are inherited, not chosen," that "it is the national community that defines the individual, not the individuals who define the national community" (ibid., 7-8).[2]

It is hard for anyone sympathetic to a relatively liberal, relatively cosmopolitan perspective on political life to reject such arguments. Nevertheless, I am skeptical about this familiar contrast between civic and ethnic nationalism. It all seems a little too good to be true, a little too close to what we would like to believe about the world. The civic/ethnic dichtomy parallels a series of other contrasts that should set off alarm bells: not only Western/Eastern, but

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rational/emotive, voluntary/inherited, good/bad, *ours/theirs!* Designed to protect us from the dangers of ethnocentric politics, the civic/ethnic distinction itself reflects a considerable dose of ethnocentrism, as if the political identities *French* and *American* were not also culturally inherited artifacts, no matter how much they develop and change as they pass from generation to generation.[3] The characterization of political community in the so-called civic nations as a rational and freely chosen allegiance to a set of political principles seems untenable to me, a mixture of self-congratulation and wishful thinking.

I am a Canadian citizen who has been studying and teaching in the United States for close to 20 years. As such, I am in the relatively unusual position of being able to choose my citizenship, to become an American citizen or remain a Canadian. Yet even though I have been given the right to exchange one identity for another, it seems absurd to me to suggest that I simply chose my current political identity, as a Canadian expatriate, for myself. If my grandfather's flight from the Tsar's armies had ended in Toledo rather than Toronto, I might be an American expatriate in Canada, grappling with the anti-Americanism of many Canadians, rather than a Canadian expatriate in the United States, grappling with the ignorance and condescension of many Americans.

The "civic" identity *Canadian* is no less an inherited cultural artifact than the "ethnic" identity *Québecois* (Kymlicka 1995). Residents of Quebec who think of Canada rather than Quebec as their political community are choosing one culturally inherited location of identity over another. They may make that choice because they believe that the Canadian government will better defend certain political principles, but those political principles do not in themselves define Canada. Canada is a contingent location for these principles, a location that comes with all kinds of inherited cultural baggage: the connection to Great Britain and British political culture; the history of tension and cooperation between French speakers and English speakers; the ambivalent relationship to Canada's overwhelmingly powerful neighbor to the south; and so on.

The same is true for the United States and France as objects of identification and loyalty. However much they may have come to stand for certain political principles, each comes loaded with inherited cultural baggage that is contingent upon their peculiar histories. That does not mean that we must accept the image of a true France

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or United States that some seek in the historical record. Collective identities are ever in the process of development and interpretation. Claims about our authentic or original identity most often represent ways of silencing debate about the interpretation of our complex and often contradictory cultural legacies (Lebovics 1992).[4] But even if collective identities such as *French* and *American* are little more than sites for controversy and construction, these sites themselves are cultural artifacts that we inherit from preceding generations.

The political identity of the French, the Canadian, or the American is not based on a set of rationally chosen political principles. No matter how much residents of the United States might sympathize with political principles favored by most French or Canadian citizens, it would not occur to them to think of themselves as French or Canadian. An attachment to certain political principles may be a necessary condition of loyalty to the national community for many citizens of contemporary liberal democracies; they are very far from a sufficient condition for that loyalty.

It may be reasonable to contrast nations whose distinctive cultural inheritance centers on political symbols and political stories with nations whose cultural inheritance centers on language and stories about ethnic origins. But it is unreasonable and unrealistic to interpret this contrast as a distinction between the rational attachment to principle and the emotional celebration of inherited culture. In order to characterize "national belonging [as] a form of rational attachment" (Ignatieff 1993, 7-8), one must ignore the contingent inheritance of distinctive experiences and cultural memories that is an inseparable part of every national political identity. And one must pretend that it makes sense to characterize nations such as France, Canada, and the United States as voluntary associations for the expression of shared political principles. Such is the myth that surrounds the idea of the civic nation.

The Myth of Consent

Defenders of this myth often cite Ernest Renan's famous description of the nation as "a daily plebiscite," a phrase that seems to point to individual consent as the source of national identity. But they rarely note that this phrase represents only half of Renan's definition of the nation. "*Two* things," Renan insists, constitute the nation:

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> One lies in the past, the other in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories, the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form. . . . The nation, like the individual, is the culmination of a long past of endeavors, sacrifice, and devotion. (Renan 1990, 19)

The nation may be a daily plebiscite for Renan, but the subject of that plebiscite is what we will do with the mix of competing symbols and stories that make up our cultural inheritance. Without "a rich legacy of memories" there are no communal loyalties to be tested by consent. The myth of the *ethnic* nation suggests that you have no choice at all in the making of your national identity: you are your cultural inheritance and nothing else.[5] The myth of the *civic* nation, in contrast, suggests that your national identity is nothing but your choice: you are the political principles you share with other like-minded individuals.

This idea of a purely political and principled basis for mutual concern and solidarity has been very attractive to Western scholars, most of whom rightly disdain the myths that sustain ethnonationalist theories of political community. It is particularly attractive to many Americans, whose peculiar national heritage—with successive waves of immigration and a constitutional founding—fosters the illusion that their mutual association is based solely on consciously chosen principles. But this idea misrepresents political reality as surely as the ethnonationalist myths it is designed to combat. And propagating a new political myth, it seems to me, is an especially inappropriate way of defending the legacy of Enlightenment liberalism from the dangers posed by the growth of nationalist political passions.

The problems with the purely civic understanding of national community emerge clearly in the most influential recent version of civic nationalist thinking: Jürgen Habermas's defense of the idea of "constitutional patriotism" (Habermas 1995; also Habermas 1989, 256–62). Habermas uses this idea to combat the resurgence of ethnic chauvinism in the wake of German reunification. He proposes loyalty to the liberal democratic principles of the postwar constitution as an alternative focus for German identity. Accordingly, he contrasts two ways of characterizing the incorporation of the East German states into the Federal union: on the one hand, as the

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restoration of "the prepolitical unity of a community with a shared historical destiny"; on the other hand, as the restoration of "democracy and a constitutional state in a territory where civil rights had been suspended . . . since 1933" (Habermas 1995, 256). Habermas's defense of constitutional patriotism is to a great extent a defense of the second, purely civic description of German reunification.

Given the terrible history of German nationalism, it is understandable that one would seek to downplay the existence of a prepolitical German identity. But Habermas's civic interpretation of German reunification merely justifies or legitimates the recent change of political regime, from communism to liberal democracy, in East Germany. It does nothing to explain or justify *reunification* with the Federal Republic. It may have been easier to establish a liberal democratic regime in East Germany by integrating it into an already functioning and wealthy liberal democracy such as the Federal Republic. But this option was not offered—or even contemplated—by the Federal Republic to the inhabitants of Czechoslovakia or Poland or any other former Communist state. How can one explain the peculiar form of East Germany's transition from Communism without invoking the prepolitical community of shared memory and history that tied West to East Germans, a sense of community that led the former to single out the latter for special support and attention? Habermas's civic interpretation of reunification begs this question.

Habermas tacitly admits as much when stating that constitutional patriotism represents a way of situating universalistic principles "in the horizon of the history of a nation" (Habermas 1995, 264). This statement clearly implies that the audience for arguments about the focus of political loyalty is not some random association of individuals united only by alliegiance to shared principles, but a prepolitical community with its own cultural "horizon" of shared memories and historical experiences. Only the existence of such cultural horizons turns a particular collection of individuals into an audience for Hamermas's arguments about the interpretation of German political history.

Habermas's plea for a constitutionally focused patriotism makes a great deal of sense *within* these cultural horizons. It is precisely because they share terrible memories of racist and militarist violence that it makes sense for Germans to cling to the Basic Law of the postwar constitution as their most valuable historical legacy. Haber-

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mas's argument works best as part of a struggle to interpret the significance of a particular community's legacy of shared memories. But as such it assumes the existence of the very prepolitical cultural community that he, like most defenders of the civic idea of the nation, rejects in the name of a community based on rational consent and political principle.

The existence of such a community is a tacit but usually unexamined assumption in the contractarian and neo-Kantian forms of political theory that Habermas favors. Social contract arguments serve to legitimate, through actual or implied consent, different ways of ordering the social and political relationships within a predefined group of individuals. For these arguments assume that there is sufficient reason for individuals deliberating about justice and the social contract to pay attention to each other's proposals and decisions, rather than to those made by individuals outside of this group. Since the whole point of these theories is to determine the proper order *within* a given group of individuals, the assumption of a prepolitical community is safely tucked away in most of the debates about the meaning of liberal democratic principles. It is only in situations in which the boundaries of such groups are in question, as when considering the reasons for German reunification, that the assumption of prepolitical communal loyalties directly comes to light.

Popular Sovereignty and Nationalism

Liberal critics of nationalism like to characterize the invocation of prepolitical national identities as part of the Romantic and irrationalist rebellion against the Enlightenment and modern political culture. But these familiar criticisms ignore the extent to which liberal democratic culture *itself* inspires people to think of themselves as members of prepolitical communities. This is especially true of the rhetoric of popular sovereignty. Popular sovereignty arguments encourage modern citizens to think of themselves as organized into communities that are logically and historically prior to the communities created by their shared political institutions. To the extent that one condemns our tendency to look for prepolitical sources of political identity, modern democratic political culture is part of the problem, not the solution.

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The doctrine of popular sovereignty insists that behind every state there stands a people, a community of individuals that makes use of the state as a means of self-government and thus has the right to establish the limits of its power. This doctrine was developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a way of countering fears that the dissolution of absolutist authority would necessarily lead to the anarchic war of all against all—claims supported by the belief that nothing but ascriptive social hierarchy binds individuals to each other. Locke and numerous other defenders of popular sovereignty responded to this fear by arguing that the dissolution of a particular form of government does not dissolve the group that institutes government, variously described as the community, the civil society, or the people (in contrast to the commonwealth or political society) (Morgan 1988).

Such notions directly influence liberal democratic culture (especially in the United States, where "We, the People" promulgated the Constitution). Modern citizens tend to imagine political community as something distinct from the state and the political processes it defines, a kind of cultural community that makes use of the state for purposes of self-government. When we are thinking about the relatively loose ties that allow us to associate with each other in public and private, we call this prepolitical community "civil society." When we emphasize government accountability to this community, we usually describe it as "the people." And when we are emphasizing the identity drawn from this community, we most often call it "the nation." All of these concepts—civil society, the people, the nation—rest on the notion of a community set apart from and using the state as a means of self-government.

Habermas deals with this difficulty by putting a Kantian gloss on popular sovereignty arguments. He portrays popular sovereignty as an "abstract model" of individual self-legislation in which "consensus is achieved in the course of argument . . . from an identically applied procedure recognized by all" (Habermas 1995, 259-60; idem 1992). Whatever its philosophical merits, this interpretation of popular sovereignty has little historical value. The contemporary political cultures that Habermas invokes as the basis for constitutional patriotism were at first established and defended in the name of the people and *la nation*, not in the name of the original position or the ideal speech situation. Moreover, the procedures for locating consensus that Habermas invokes as the basis for popular sovereignty

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assume that individuals know beforehand *with whom* they are seeking to achieve consensus. The abstractness of Habermas's understanding of communal consensus does nothing to eliminate this assumption, even if it makes it harder to locate. As long as there is little controversy about the historical referent for rhetorical invocations of the people, as in the English, American, and French Revolutions, this assumption tends to remain in the background. But disagreements about the historical identity of "the people" bring the assumption into question, creating severe difficulties for popular sovereignty arguments. We need to face up to the implications of our reliance on such assumptions, even if doing so makes us uneasy by showing how individual rights and political freedoms depend to a certain extent on the contingencies and vagaries of shared memory and identity.

Ethnonationalists, however, are no more comfortable with the real-world contingencies of communal identity than proponents of the civic nation. Ethnonationalists rid themselves of their discomfort by picking out one source of identity in our ever-changing communal heritage and turning it into a norm against which we should measure our political communities. But in order to portray ethnic community as the norm for political community, ethnonationalists must make a number of implausible claims about our communal identities. They must insist, for example, that we can each trace our cultural identities back to some discrete ethnic community; that these communities maintain their original character through time; and that even where there seems little evidence of ethnic consciousness, these communities persist in their original character, waiting like a sleeping beauty to be awakened by the kiss of national self-assertion. In truth, ethnic identities are part of a contingent and ever-changing legacy of shared memories and communal identification. Portraying them as the norm against which to measure the prepolitical sense of community associated with modern states requires a gross misrepresentation of the historical record.

The proponents of the purely civic idea of the nation rebel against the search for norms within the contingencies of our historical experience. But, as I have tried to show, the norms that they come up with tend to say much more about the way in which we should order lives within *given* national communities than about why the boundaries of these communities should take one shape rather than another. As a result, they, too, tend to propagate myths

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about national identity by redescribing contingent communities of memory and experience as if they were nothing more than voluntary associations of individuals, united by their shared attachment to a body of moral and political principles.

Why There Were No Greek Nation-States

One way of focusing attention upon the close connections that the citizens of so-called civic nations make between political and cultural community is to contrast them with their ancient Greek predecessors. This comparison is especially useful because, for the ancient Greeks, the distinction between *ethnos* and *demos* was an organizing principle rather than a moral aspiration. The inherited cultural identity that they shared as Greeks was clearly distinguished from their political identity as participants in one polis or another. As a result, the ancient Greeks actually separated cultural and political community in a way that it is difficult for modern citizens even to imagine, let alone emulate.

Students of Greek history have long been puzzled by this separation of cultural and political community. Why, they ask, did the Greeks, with their vibrant and wonderfully creative sense of cultural identity, not connect cultural community with a broader sense of political identity and loyalty? A great amount of ink has been spilled exploring the question why the Greeks did not, in effect, develop the idea of national community (Finley 1975). But if, as most students of nationalism agree, there is no necessary connection between *ethnos* and *demos* (Francis 1965, 77), then it is *our* idea of political community, rather than the Greeks', which is odd and in need of explanation. Looking at Greek political practice and imagination helps make clear just how thoroughly we have integrated political and cultural identity.

Consider how the Greeks founded colonies. Citizens of one polis would set off to build or take over a new one. They took with them their cultural and personal identities as Greeks, but not their political identity as members of the demos of the polis they left behind. As a result, they endured few of the painful loyalty struggles experienced by modern colonists both before and after the establishment of independence from the mother country. For the Greeks, to found a colony was to found a new political identity. A

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new polis brought into being a new demos, since the demos was nothing but the community of individuals organized to govern themselves. Cultural identity as Greeks was something that colonists carried with them wherever they went. But political identity depended on continued participation in a particular polis.

Or consider the relative casualness of treason in ancient Greek politics. I have always found this a little jarring, given the conventional wisdom that Greek political life entailed submergence in a collective political identity. Can one imagine an American Alcibiades returning and being given command of an American army after defecting to the Soviet Union and helping to reorganize the Soviet military? Or imagine the fuss if the two greatest leaders of a successful Cold War America went over to the defeated enemy, as Themistocles and Pausanius went over to the Persians. Such an event would be a monumental personal and political betrayal to be memorialized far more intensely than Benedict Arnold's treason. Yet, at least in Thucydides's recounting, these betrayals recur regularly without the attention we would give to them. Indeed, in Thucydides's judgment Themistocles "has a claim on our admiration quite extraordinary and unparalleled," a judgment that one could never expect to hear from a contemporary historian dealing with someone whose life ended in the betrayal of his or her country (Thucydides 1982, 1.138). Putting ourselves and our politicians in the place of these Greek leaders, we expect some sign of inner turmoil and conflict of loyalty, but find none.

The reason for this difference, I believe, is that for us treason suggests a kind of self-betrayal, a betrayal of our own cultural and personal identity.[6] This is a telltale sign of the strong connection we make between political and cultural identity, even in liberal democracies. Lacking this connection, the ancient Greeks seem disinclined to treat treason as a form of self-betrayal. Alcibiades and Themistocles were still Greeks when they went to Sparta and to Persia. They took that element of identity with them wherever they went. But once they left Athens, or more to the point, once they thought Athens had rejected them, they were no longer Athenians. Like colonists embarking for a new community, they left their political identity behind them, something that modern politicians, no matter how venal and untrustworthy, find it very hard to do, and something modern citizens would find appalling.

Compare Themistocles's reaction to his ostracism and exile to

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that of a modern counterpart, Alfred Dreyfus. Dreyfus, completely innocent and honorable, subjected to years of torture on Devil's Isle, remained loyal to the French nation throughout his ordeal and tried to prove his loyalty to an army that went to extraordinary lengths to destroy him even when fully aware of his innocence. Themistocles, in contrast, a man who was far from innocent of dishonesty and double-dealing, simply went off to join the Persians, the enemy he had done so much to defeat, after suffering the ingratitude of the Athenian people.

Judith Shklar constructed this comparison between Themistocles and Dreyfus in order to illustrate the difference between viewing political commitments as a matter of rational obligation and as a matter of emotional loyalty (Shklar 1993, 188–91). Themistocles's reaction to exile, she insists, is a reasonable response to an unjust world. His obligations to Athens were at an end after the citizenry voted to ostracize him. Dreyfus's reaction, in contrast, is for her a demonstration of the irrational lengths to which emotional ties of loyalty can drive us. The French army had cynically sacrificed Dreyfus to their vision of the nation, a vision that it was clear had no room for Jewish officers. How could Dreyfus still seek to prove his loyalty to an army that had betrayed him so callously and completely? Loyalty of this sort, Shklar declares, is nothing short of madness (Shklar 1993, 191).

I draw somewhat different conclusions from Shklar's comparison of ancient and modern exiles. The stark contrast between Themistocles's and Dreyfus's reactions to injustice strikingly illustrates a crucial difference between ancient Greek and modern attitudes toward political community. Dreyfus was so intent on demonstrating his loyalty to the French nation because that community was an important part of his personal identity. He took his French identity with him wherever he went, even to Devil's Isle; refusing to serve the nation and its army on his return would be like betraying himself. For Themistocles, in contrast, his abandonment of Athens raised few questions of self-betrayal. He, like other Greek exiles, could take his personal identity as a Greek with him wherever he went, but that identity did not require any demonstration of loyalty to the Athenian political community. Once he was no longer allowed to be an active part of that community, it no longer had any claims on his loyalty. Extreme though Dreyfus's expression of loyalty to an unworthy France may be, I believe that most modern cit-

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izens would find his intense struggle with conflicting loyalties easier to identify with than Themistocles's cold calculation.[7] For most modern citizens, as for Dreyfus, betraying one's political community involves self-betrayal in a way it did not for Themistocles and the ancient Greeks.

My brief comparison between Greek and modern citizens thus drives me toward a somewhat surprising conclusion: that (at least in one important sense) modern citizens are more loyal to, and more strongly identified with, their political communities than their ancient Greek counterparts. This conclusion is surprising because we have been taught by Rousseau and others to think of ancient citizenship as complete subordination to the collective identity of the polis (Yack 1993, 10-16, 30-33, 71-85). Moreover, it is hard to believe that the normally passive citizens of a modern nation could identify more with their political communities than ancient Greek citizens who spent so much more of their time fighting their country's battles and participating in its political life.

But participation is not the same thing as identification. For the ancient Greeks, political community referred to the sharing of self-government, not to the identity-shaping cultural community modern citizens experience. Indeed, I suspect that the relatively intense participation of Greek citizens in political life made it *harder* for them to identify with their political communities in the way that modern citizens do. It is far easier to declare "my country right or wrong" when I passively receive national policy from my representatives than when I am actively involved in making and executing it myself. When I am directly involved in the political process, then its ups and downs, victories and defeats are bound to affect me much more personally and encourage me to distinguish myself from my political community. The ancient Greeks appear to have had a passion for political activity, rather than an overwhelming identification with their polis. We are the ones, after all, who sanctify bipartisanship. Solon's laws, in contrast, punished those who did *not* choose sides in the city's political struggles (Aristotle 1950, 76).

Because it brings political and cultural community together in a way that was foreign to the ancient Greeks, modern nationalism, whether of the civic or the ethnic variety, combines political loyalty with loyalty to oneself. Political betrayal involves self-betrayal for modern citizens, regardless of whether the betrayed cultural inheritance is more closely associated with political or ethnic symbols and

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stories. An American politician who calmly changed political identity simply because of a slight preference for French or Canadian political principles would probably seem just as peculiar and out of place in the world of the civic nations as the cold and calculating Athenian statesman Themistocles.

The Dependence of Liberalism on Nationalism

The late Ernest Gellner once quipped that Marxists have been forced to come up with a "wrong address" theory of history in order to explain the success of nationalism: history had a message for classes that somehow got delivered to nations by mistake (Gellner 1983, 129). Liberal theorists are only beginning to face up to their similar disappointment. History, they believed, had a message for individuals, but that message somehow got delivered by mistake to nations. The age of liberal individualism has also been the age of nationalism; liberal practices have been realized, for the most part, within the framework of national communities.

The myth of the civic nation reflects one strategy that liberals have pursued in order to salvage their hopes for modern politics: find and preserve a form of national community that is compatible with liberal political commitments. If only there were a viable form of national community that reflected shared political principles rather than some particular cultural inheritance, then the growth of national identity need not undermine social diversity and universal human rights. History's message could then still be delivered to individuals "care of" the civic nation.

But wishing won't make it so. The idea of the civic nation defends the Enlightenment's liberal legacy by employing the very concept—that of the political community as a voluntary association—whose plausibility has been undermined by the success of nationalism. The liberal legacy of individual rights and political rationality has developed within political communities that impart a kind of inherited cultural identity quite unforeseen by Enlightenment liberals. The battle to preserve that legacy is taking place *within* the framework provided by such communities. Within that framework we have every reason to construct and defend distinctions between more and less inclusive forms of national community. But in doing so we should not fool ourselves into thinking

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that what we are constructing is a freely chosen and purely civic form of national identity.

Even if the myth of the civic nation were true, I doubt that voluntary associations for the expression of shared political principle would be as conducive to toleration and diversity as their supporters expect them to be. There would be plenty of room of exclusion and suspicion of difference in a political community based solely on a shared commitment to political principles. We should be willing to exclude anyone from such a community who disagrees with its basic principles. Moreover, we might be inclined to exclude anyone whom we *suspect* of rejecting these principles. For if it is commitment to certain principles that makes one a member of a community, then we will probably want to know whether this commitment is genuine or a mask for subversion.

The possibility of intolerance and paranoia in a truly "civic" nation is far from academic or hypothetical. After all, American citizens have been denounced and persecuted for clinging to un-American political principles as well as for their foreign backgrounds. And as George Mosse reminds us, it was the decidedly civic nation of the French Jacobins that invented many of the techniques of persecution and mass paranoia exploited by twentieth-century fascists and xenophobic nationalists (Mosse 1993, 65–72).

It is only because so few of us really take the idea of a community of shared principle seriously that it appears to be an antidote to exclusion and intolerance. Were Americans, for example, to make citizenship contingent upon commitment to political principles instead of the mere accident of birth (to citizen parents or on American territory), they might become considerably more suspicious of their fellow citizens' declarations of political loyalty. Birthright citizenship can promote toleration precisely by removing the question of communal membership from the realm of choice and contention about political principles.[8]

In the end, I believe that Renan got it right. Two things make a nation: present-day consent and a rich cultural inheritance of shared memories and practices. Without consent our cultural legacy would be our destiny, rather than a set of background constraints on our activities. But without such a legacy there would be no consent at all, since there would be no reason for people to seek agreement with any one group of individuals rather than another. Focusing exclusively on one or the other component of national

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identity inspires the contrasting myths of ethnonationalist and civic theories of political community, myths that exaggerate, on the one side, our inability to change, build on, and improve on the communal ties we have inherited and, on the other, our capacity to recreate ourselves in the image of our liberal theories.

NOTES

1. Moreover, the normative slant in these dichotomies is not always in the direction of the "Western," "political" variant of nationalism. Meinecke's (1970) distinction between political and cultural states, for example, is clearly designed to support the superiority of the cultural version of nationhood favored by Germans.
2. For similar arguments, see Bogdan Denitch's (1994) defense of civic nationalism; Liah Greenfeld's (1992) distinction between Anglo-American and continental European forms of nationalism; and Dominique Schnapper's defense of the idea of the civic nation, in which she attempts to prove that the "very notion of an ethnic nation is a contradiction in terms" (1994, 24-30, 95, 178).
3. Indeed, the idea of the civic nation, with its portrayal of community as a shared and rational choice of universally valid principles, is itself a cultural inheritance in nations like France and the United States. One aspect of distinctly French and American political ideologies is to portray their own cultural inheritance as a universally valid object of rational choice (Dumont 1994, 3-4, 199-201).
4. An appeal to original political principles, by the way, functions just as well as an appeal to cultural origins in shutting down debate about the meaning of one's political community. Opponents of multiculturalism, such as Arthur Schlesinger (1992), often use the appeal to original principles like "*e pluribus unum*" in this way.
5. Renan's complaint about the "German" understanding of nationhood, according to which Alsatians owed allegiance to Germany in spite of their explicit identification with France, is that it *eliminates* choice from nationhood, not that it refers to cultural inheritance as a source of nationhood (Renan 1990). This view of nationhood does not allow the Alsatians to focus on the legacy of French cultural symbols and associations (many of which are explicitly political in nature), which, like the German language, is part of their cultural inheritance. For Renan a nation grows out of the choices we make within our cultural inheritance. For a treatment of current American debates about cultural identity that stresses choice within a complex cultural inheritance, see Hollinger 1995.

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6. Another factor in the casualness of treason among the ancient Greeks was the existence of networks of guest-friendships connecting aristocratic families in different cities (Herman 1987).
7. As an emigré from regimes, National Socialism and Stalinist Communism, with which she could not possibly have identified, it is not surprising that Shklar found it easier to identify with Themistocles than with Dreyfus.
8. Those, like Peter Schuck and Rogers Smith (1987) who complain about birthright citizenship as an anomaly in American political culture—a violation of its commitment to liberal principles of consent—fail to see this point. Birthright citizenship can have the effect of moderating our concern about our neighbors' commitments to shared principles, thereby promoting greater inclusion and toleration.

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Nicholas Xenos

CIVIC NATIONALISM: OXYMORON?

ABSTRACT: *Recent attempts to distinguish a normatively acceptable "civic nationalism"—as distinct from an irrationally tainted "ethnic nationalism"—have failed to take seriously the implications of the transition from the city as the immediate spatial unit of the* patria *to the more abstract national state that replaced it. The nation-state has required a mythologizing naturalism to legitimate it, thus blurring the distinction between "civic" and "ethnic." The urban political experience of the* patria *is lost to us; cosmopolitan intellectuals should resist the comforting temptation to recover it in the nation, and should recognize civic nationalism for the oxymoron it is.*

In his now classic book, *The Idea of Nationalism* (1945), Hans Kohn distinguished two types of nationalism. The first, or "Western" type had its origin in movements for popular sovereignty in England in the seventeenth century and France in the eighteenth. Western nationalism is characterized by an identification of the masses with the nation; this identification, in turn, serves as the justificatory foundation of the modern state in an age when the political and cultural integration of the entire population is assumed. The second, or "Eastern" type of nationalism originates later and as an alien imposition upon a less economically and politically developed entity. Unlike the first type, where nationalism as an idea infuses an

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already existing political structure, in the second type the idea precedes and forms the justification for the establishment of the state. In the Eastern mode, nationalism is buttressed not by adhesion to popular political forms but to cultural identification:

> Outside the Western world, in Central and Eastern Europe and in Asia, nationalism arose not only later, but also generally at a more backward stage of social and political development: the frontiers of an existing state and of a rising nationality rarely coincided; nationalism, there, grew in protest against and in conflict with the existing state pattern—not primarily to transform it into a people's state, but to redraw the political boundaries in conformity with ethnographic demands. (Kohn 1945, 329)

While in the West, Kohn speculated, the historical tradition of the Enlightenment could keep any atavism inherent in nationalism in check, in the East, nationalism was more likely to manifest an unruly, resentful desire for a mythic past and an unrealistic future.

Tom Nairn has succinctly summarized the general normative tenor of Kohn's distinction. The Western variant, Nairn writes, "was original, institutional, liberal and good. The [Eastern] was reactive, envious, ethnic, racist and generally bad" (Nairn 1993).

Kohn's interpretation of nationalism reflected the period in which it emerged, insofar as he sought to account for the rise of fascism on Western Europe's perimeter while salvaging some sense of the patriotic nationalism of the West's triumph in the war. With the waning of the fascist threat and its replacement by Soviet communist internationalism in the view of American political scientists, Kohn's book gradually slipped into the status of an unread classic. Recently, however, Kohn's conceptualization of two forms of nationalism has reemerged as new attention has come to be focused on nationalism in the wake of the collapsing Soviet empire and the supposed reappearance of nationalist movements and conflicts in Europe. In the newer version, Kohn's Western and Eastern nationalisms have been reconceived as civic and ethnic nationalism, respectively. And in this reformulation, Kohn's normative judgments are similarly transposed, with "civic" standing for everything that was good about Western nationalism and "ethnic" acquiring the connotation of everything bad about the Eastern version. Thus Michael Ignatieff, in a thoughtful journalistic account of various contemporary nationalist conflicts, claims that civic nationalism is

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virtually identical with democracy, since it posits "that the nation should be composed of all those—regardless of race, color, creed, gender, language, or ethnicity—who subscribe to the nation's political creed," while ethnic nationalism tends toward authoritarianism because it presupposes an inherited commonality that must be imposed when it is not otherwise forthcoming (Ignatieff 1993, 6-8). This formulation is echoed in various ways in several recent works (Greenfeld 1992, 10-11; Viroli 1995a, 5-21; Keane 1992, 10-12; and Tamir 1993, 3-7, where "liberal nationalism" is the preferred term for civic nationalism).

Of these, Liah Greenfeld is perhaps closest to Kohn in dividing up the world's nation-states geographically. For both Kohn and Greenfeld, Western Europe and North America are the sites where nationalism takes on a civic character, while Central and Eastern Europe manifest ethnic nationalism (unlike Kohn, Greenfeld is not concerned with nationalism outside these areas), and for at least one similar reason. For both analysts, the fact that national consciousness arose later outside Western Europe means that it was based on an unequal comparison in which resentment played an important part. Both writers construct a theory of nationalism that suggests that all national movements outside a few Western countries have taken and will take on the "bad," ethnic form.[1] Others (such as Ignatieff) are not only alarmed by the rise of ethnonationalism outside the core European and North American countries, but by manifestations of it within, as well. Their theoretical project then becomes one of trying to find possibilities for engendering civic nationalism so as to fend off the ethnic variant within the liberal democracies as well as outside them. It is safe to say, however, that for all of the theorists of civic nationalism, a normative commitment to liberal democracy underlies their scholarly projects, and thus that there is a political thrust to their work.

The Politics of Civic Nationalism

A common theme of much of the recent work on civic nationalism is the claim that the language and politics of nationalism have been left to antidemocrats or reactionaries, who are the natural purveyors of ethnic nationalism. Yael Tamir, for example, situates herself within Israeli debates in the following way:

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> My attempt to introduce national values into the liberal discourse is motivated by an ongoing personal commitment to pursue a national vision while remaining faithful to a set of liberal beliefs. I have consequently refrained from taking a frequently offered piece of advice suggesting I renounce the concept of "nationalism" in favour of a less emotionally loaded term, such as "people" or the much discussed "community." Although resorting to a less controversial and less pejorative term might have made my position more acceptable, I thought it would be wrong to bypass the concept of nationalism. Liberals who give up this term and surrender it to the use of conservative political forces, or note the difference, to chauvinist and racist ideologies, alienate themselves from a whole set of values that are of immense importance to a great many people, including liberals. (Tamir 1993, 5)

While Tamir here makes clear that she is trying to reconcile political interests that are generally considered antagonistic to each other—liberalism and nationalism—other authors strike a somewhat more instrumental tone. Maurizio Viroli, for example, notes that "even if the political costs have been enormous, the left has almost always allowed the right a monopoly on the language of patriotism" by being internationalist in its orientation. It is therefore necessary today for the democratic left to rectify the situation and "confront nationalism on its own terms; it must have a response to the need for national identity, but its response must be different from that of nationalism; it must not abandon the terrain, but it must not meanwhile become confused with its enemy" (Viroli 1995, 19-20).[2] Civic nationalism provides the conceptual ground for this political response, allowing the left to claim a commitment to the "good" form of national identity.

Michael Ignatieff follows Tamir and Viroli in offering both a personal and a political mea culpa. Ignatieff admits to a cosmopolitanism that he sees as a form of privilege which he wishes to renounce through a new appreciation of the power of nationalism (Ignatieff 1993, 13). Speaking on behalf of his generation (also mine), Ignatieff writes that we thought nationalism was dead and that the fall of the Berlin Wall was the beginning of a new era of liberal democracy in the world, only to discover that the language of rights has been pushed aside by the language of ethnic nationalism:

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> With blithe lightness of mind, we assumed that the world was moving irrevocably beyond nationalism, beyond tribalism, beyond the provincial confines of the identities inscribed in our passports, toward a global market culture that was to be our new home. In retrospect, we were whistling in the dark. The repressed has returned, and its name is nationalism. (Ibid., 5)

After surveying the effects of nationalism in Canada, Northern Ireland, Ukraine, Croatia and Serbia, Kurdistan, and Germany, Ignatieff concludes that "the only reliable antidote to ethnic nationalism turns out to be civic nationalism, because the only guarantee that ethnic groups will live side by side in peace is shared loyalty to a state strong enough, fair enough, equitable enough to command their obedience" (ibid., 243). This conclusion neatly fits the notion that nationalism is a given feature of the modern political landscape[3] and that any political position hopeful of finding a place in that landscape must adapt to its presence or perish.

Patriotism and the Patria

One of the common elements in the case for civic nationalism is thus the imperative to revive or reinvent a form of collective identity that corresponds to the notion of patriotism, understood as a commitment to liberal democratic institutions within a specific heritage, rather than to blood or language. A great deal hinges on this point. Historically, the patriotism-as-civic-nationalism argument serves to buttress the contention that there is a historical tradition linking civic nationalism to sentiments of political collectivity in the past, thus allowing the perception that nationalism is a modern shape given to a constant form. It is this argument that I wish to challenge.

Patriotism means love of the *patria*. The proponents of civic nationalism generally take it for granted that the patria and the nation are one and the same; that the contemporary form of the patria is the nation. Viroli's book, *Per amore della patria: patriottism e nazionalismo nella storia*, however, signals a problem with this interpretation in its very title. The English translation of the book is entitled *For Love of Country: An Essay on Patriotism and Nationalism* (Viroli 1995b). Had "patria" been translated as "nation," the intended jux-

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taposition in the subtitle would not make sense in English. Nor is "country" an adequate solution, though it is one that is often attempted. One of the most often cited passages in the writings of Niccolò Machiavelli attests to the difficulty. In a letter to his friend Francesco Vettori written shortly before his death, Machiavelli asserted, "amo patria mia più dell'anima" (Machiavelli 1961, 505, letter of April 16, 1527). In his *Florentine Histories*, Machiavelli had earlier ascribed similar sentiments to several of his fourteenth-century predecessors, of whom he wrote: "tanto quelli cittadini stimavono allora più la patria che l'anima" (Machiavelli 1962, 225). The only word in these phrases that gives translators trouble is *patria*. Allan Gilbert renders the first statement thus: "I love my native city more than my soul" (Machiavelli 1965, 1010). In his translation of the passage from the *Histories*, Gilbert opts simply to render "patria" as "city" (ibid., 1150). I think these are reasonable choices, but since Machiavelli could have used the term *città*, which appears ubiquitously in his writings, he appears to leave the door open to other interpretations. Thus, Laura F. Banfield and Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr., more recently, and more tendentiously, have chosen "fatherland" in their translation of the *Histories* (Machiavelli 1988, 114). This has the merit of conveying the literal sense of the Latin "patria," which means "the father's thing," but completely obscures Machiavelli's repeated and consistent identification with Florence, an entity better captured by "city" rather than the particularly loaded "fatherland." Sebastian de Grazia's biography of Machiavelli, meanwhile, makes the same choice as Viroli's English publisher: "patria" becomes "country" in his translation of the letter (de Grazia 1989, 342).

A recent translation of a work of Machiavelli's younger contemporary, Francesco Guicciardini, displays the same ambiguities. The translator, Alison Brown, explains her sense of the term patria in a glossary: "one's own city, native city, country, birthplace or homeland, all used in preference to 'fatherland.' I have in one instance translated it as 'city walls'" (Guicciardini 1994, 201). For his part, Viroli assumes that the patria is the city in his discussion of Machiavelli, glossing his quotation of the passage from the *Histories* thusly: "To love the patria more than one's own soul means to be ready to sacrifice the soul for the liberty of the city, if necessary" (Viroli 1995a, 40). More particularly, Viroli understands "patria" to signify the city as the embodiment of liberty, as the following passage makes clear:

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> The patria is both a mode of life and a culture, it is a *particular* mode of life and a culture which is based on the values of liberty and civil equality. In the celebrated letter to Francesco Vettori in which Machiavelli writes "amo la mia patria più della mia anima," we may substitute "to live free" for the word 'patria' without altering the meaning of the phrase, but if we substituted "nation" for "patria," Machiavelli's words would be senseless. (Ibid., 39)[4]

The question is, if "patria" cannot be rendered by "nation," how can patriotism come to be seen as equivalent to civic nationalism?

Viroli answers this question by tracing the transferral of the notion of patriotism from the republican city to the monarchical state. Indeed, he notes a change that takes place in the usage of "patria" in Guicciardini's *Dialogue on the Government of Florence* (Viroli 1995, 45). (This change is perhaps confirmed above, for the republican sense of the term that Viroli observes in Machiavelli is nowhere present in Alison Brown's various renderings of the term in Guicciardini.) Thereafter, the republican sense of patriotism remains in the background, making occasional appearances in selected authors through the next two centuries, primarily in England (ibid., 43-62). It is in Rousseau that Viroli sees the reemergence of patriotism in the Machiavellian sense; he traces its continuation after the French Revolution through the writings of Mazzini, whom Viroli contrasts to the German theorists of cultural nationalism.

Recognizing that the language of nationalism has crowded out that of patriotism, Viroli thinks he finds an opening for a revival of patriotic discourse in the experience of the Italian antifascist resistance, with its attachment to a liberal Italian political history juxtaposed against the Fascist national myth. As an example, Viroli quotes a long passage written by the novelist Natalia Ginzburg, which he says conveys the essential qualities of patriotic discourse, framed in terms of affection and love. However, although Ginzburg does mention Italy in quotation marks, her understanding of "patria" is most notable for its urban imagery. She writes:

> The streets and piazzas of the cities, once the theater of our adolescent boredom and object of our haughty contempt, became the sites which were necessary to defend. The words 'patria' and 'Italy', which had made us so nauseated between the school walls because accompanied by the adjective 'fascist', because swollen with emptiness, appeared to us at one stroke without adjectives and thus transformed

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> so that they seemed to us to be heard and thought for the first time. At one stroke the truth came to our ears. We were there to defend the patria and the patria was those streets and those piazzas, our dear ones and our childhood, and all the people who passed. A truth so simple and so obvious appeared strange to us because we had grown up with the conviction that we had no patria and that we had come to be born, to our disgrace, in a place swollen with emptiness. And even more strange seemed to us the fact that, for the love of all those unknown who had passed, and for love of a future unknown but which we discerned in the distance, between privation and devastation, solidity and splendor, everyone was ready to lose themselves and their lives. (Viroli 1995a, 165-66)[5]

In his gloss on this passage, Viroli emphasizes the willingness to commit oneself to unknown others who had not been part of our intimate lives but who "walk on our streets," thus "uncovering a common good that deserves to be defended and which we perceive in the streets and in the piazzas of the city" (1995a, 166). But Ginzburg never mentions institutions and concepts of the sort Viroli previously associated with the patria, i.e., republicanism and liberty. And the affection displayed is not toward "the nation," but rather toward the city and toward the particular streets and piazzas of individual experience. The unknown others may be unknown, but they have been seen in the public spaces of the city. That public space, that shared life, is the common good, if there is one. It is not at all abstract, and I think it is telling that when Viroli adduces an example of patriotic affection, it is framed in these urban terms. I want to suggest that Ginzburg's characterization corresponds closely to what Machiavelli meant by the patria, and that this correspondence shows the weakness rather than the strength of the appeal to civic nationalism as patriotism.

When Machiavelli asserts his love of his patria, he clearly is referring to Florence in its cultural and historical entirety (Hulliung 1983, 95-96), an identity he did as much as anyone to articulate in his *Istorie*, where he painted the buildings, streets, and piazzas of the city with the signs of Florence's past. The city came to constitute a three-dimensional signifier of both individual and collective experience. This set of experiences was uniquely urban, as were those of the original patria, Rome. The patria is thus intimately connected to *civitas*.

When Ginzburg invokes a similar sensibility, it is both unsurpris-

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ing and unique in the contemporary world, I think, because perhaps only in central and northern Italy is the city still experienced in this way, as the immediate and primary site of collective life and political identity. When Ginzburg and her compatriots thought about "Italy" it was as a conglomerate of cities: of Turin and Milan and Florence; of Rome and Mantua and Verona. Many Italians from these regions still identify themselves primarily with their cities and secondarily with their regions and little, if at all, with Italy as a nation.[6] The sentiments articulated by Ginzburg may therefore help us to feel how distant we are from the Machiavellian patriotism Viroli hopes to invoke, rather than to gain a glimpse of its revival.

It may be the case, as Benedict Anderson has argued, that "all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (Anderson 1991, 6). While there is an element of abstractness in the evocations of the city in Machiavelli and Ginzburg, the city exists as a physical marker of a created space that is experienced both intellectually and sensually.[7] To risk a pun, there is a concreteness to the urban experience that has no counterpart in the experience of the nation. It is one thing to imagine others strolling the same streets and piazzas one once experienced distractedly; quite another to imagine that one's existence is tied to people with whom one has never had contact in places one has never seen, much less "experienced." By focusing so intently upon the element of republicanism and liberty, Viroli has lost sight of the importance of scale and of the change in political experience in the West over the past five centuries. A broader perspective is needed in order to see that both civic and ethnic nationalism represent efforts to create a sense of identity akin to love of patria, but at a much more abstract level. Once seen from that perspective, the two forms of nationalism appear much less distinct.

Patriotism and the Nation

The French Revolution is characteristically understood to mark a milestone in the evolution of civic nationalism. Indeed, France is usually contrasted with Germany to represent the civic and ethnic forms of national identity, respectively. Rogers Brubaker has empha-

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sized that the Revolution marked a watershed in establishing the terms for national membership in a language of rights, thus advancing the modern concept of citizenship and helping to realize the need clearly to demarcate between citizen and foreigner (Brubaker 1992, 39-49). At the same time, the Revolution had the effect of stimulating an organic, ethnic nationalism in response to its expansiveness (Xenos 1989, 201-28). But there is another distinction that perhaps needs to be made, between the civic and the national *within* the Revolution. This distinction rests on the interplay of the "natural" with the construction of Revolutionary national identity.

When the delegates of the Third Estate declared themselves the National Assembly in July 1789, they initiated a struggle over whose definition of the nation would count. Some of the more extreme elements of the aristocracy had long since declared themselves to be descended from a conquering race, thus legitimating their domination over racially inferior French men and women. This claim, and the support shown for them by the European aristocracy as a whole, made it easy for them to fall outside the new definition of the nation. And that put them outside the purview of the "the natural and imprescriptable rights of man" declared the next month, because besides articulating these rights, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen also declared the nation sovereign, thus embodying those rights in the nation. To be outside the nation meant to be a threat to the rights contained within it; hence the imperative of war against enemies without and within (203-208).

When Louis XVI was convicted of treason, he, too, found himself outside the nation and hence a candidate for decapitation. With him went the figure of the nation's father, to be replaced by the ideal of *fraternité*. In his *Contrat social*, Rousseau had argued that the family was "the first model of political societies," and his version of that model was notable for the absence of a mother (Rousseau 1962, 24, my translation). Lynn Hunt has examined the process by which the Revolution recreated Rousseau's political family without the father—there are no Founding Fathers in the French historical pantheon—but with a good mother, represented in the asexual figure of Marianne, to take the place of the bad mother, Marie-Antoinette (Hunt 1992). This reconstituted national family was one of several inventions of the Revolution that served to give the new order the semblance of a natural one. The revolutionary festivals and the Cult of the Supreme Being were others. Together, these institutions and

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images helped to constitute a new national identity and an informal sense of membership. They also helped compensate for the upheaval of the Revolution. But of all the innovations of the Revolution, the *levée en masse* probably had the greatest effect, drawing into the service of the Revolution people from all over France who had never ventured far from their native villages and towns, thus introducing them to "France," the nation as patrie, for the first time.

Paris dominated the Revolution in its radical phases and then came to be the center of a highly centralized state. The tradition of the medieval commune lived on for a while in attitudes of self-government and cosmopolitanism.[8] But the process of nation building was everywhere a process of conflict with that same tradition of urban self-government, and the political history of France in the nineteenth century can be written as the story of the struggle by the French nation-state, born of the Revolution, to subdue the old Paris. This struggle, symbolized in Hausmann's rebuilding of the city, culminated in the suppression of the Paris Commune in 1871. The state summoned a national army drawn from the provinces, a legacy of the Revolution, to subdue the anticlerical Communards, whose leadership contained a great many foreigners. Once, to be a patriot had meant simply to defend the Revolution; now, it meant to be recognized by the state as French. The forces of the nation triumphed over those of the city; national assimilationism defeated urban cosmopolitanism; the "rooted," "natural" French nation displaced the deracinated, artificial city.

The natural France was a second-order construction reconceived as natural. The rights claimed by the cities and their citizens were historical rights that had to be replaced by natural ones, assuring equality for all citizens (Brubaker 1992, 42-43). The Revolution created an abstraction—the French nation as repository of natural rights—and then had to cloak that abstraction in the imagery of a natural entity. The city represented an older and more particular tradition that had to be suppressed to make way for a contradiction: civic nationalism.

American Unexceptionalism

Michael Walzer has claimed that the United States is different from other places because this nation is neither a patrie nor a homeland

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(Walzer 1996, 24-25). According to Walzer, the language of family used in American political debate here is simply rhetoric used to buttress controversial welfarist arguments of mutual responsibility. Americans know they came from somewhere else and are united not by blood but "by virtue of having come together" (27). To be an "American" is, on Walzer's reading, a sign of "the citizenship, not the nativity or nationality, of the men and women it designates. It is a political adjective, and its politics is liberal in the strict sense: generous, tolerant, ample, accommodating—it allows for the survival, even the enhancement and flourishing, of manyness" (26). I take this to be a description of American identity that is consistent with the understanding of civic nationalism.

Walzer's interpretation of American identity is also consistent in its broad outline with a position argued by John H. Schaar in an article originally published in 1973 that seems to be a precursor of current interpretations of civic nationalism, only with a more radical political intent. In "The Case for Patriotism," Schaar contrasted patriotism to nationalism; his purpose was to reinvigorate an increasingly unpopular radicalism by reviving a sentiment that had earned the scorn of radicals during the struggles over the war in Vietnam.

Schaar begins by distinguishing three different senses of patriotism. All are based ultimately in what he describes as a universal human characteristic:

> At its core, patriotism means love of one's homeplace, and of the familiar things and scenes associated with the homeplace. In this sense, patriotism is one of the basic human sentiments. If not a natural tendency in the species, it is at least a proclivity produced by realities basic to human life, for territoriality, along with family, has always been a primary associative bond. We become devoted to the people, places, and ways that nurture us, and what is familiar and nurturing seems also natural and right. This is the root of patriotism. (Schaar 1981, 287)

The first of the variants of patriotism that he distinguishes he calls "natural" or "land" patriotism, by which he means a sense of indebtedness to the land itself, such as was felt by ancient Greeks or the Navaho but which is unavailable to us, since we are a rootless, restless people indifferent to the land (287).[9] The second form he calls "city" patriotism, which attaches to the creations of human be-

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ings rather than nature and of which Pericles' funeral oration is taken to be the prime example (290). This, too, is unavailable to us because the American city is the site of hustle and change, not allowing attachments to form.

It is the third kind of patriotism that Schaar sees as not only available to us but even as an American invention. He calls this form, following Lincoln, "covenanted" patriotism:

> Abraham Lincoln, the supreme authority on this subject, thought there was a patriotism unique to America. Americans, a motley gathering of various races and cultures, were bonded together not by blood or religion, not by tradition or territory, not by the walls and traditions of a city, but by a political idea. We are a nation formed by a covenant, by dedication to a set of principles and by an exchange of promises to uphold and advance certain commitments among ourselves and throughout the world. Those principles and commitments are the core of American identity, the soul of the body politic. (291)

Schaar is at pains to distinguish Lincoln's view from the apparently similar conception of a civil religion in Rousseau, since for Lincoln the nation is to be venerated only as long as it upholds the convenant, while for Rousseau the purpose of the civil religion is veneration of the nation itself. The decline of American patriotism and its replacement by nationalism is understood by Schaar to be represented by a decline from Lincoln to Rousseau (291).

Schaar's evocation of Lincoln's vision is eloquent, but the sources cited by him can be read to show the affinity between Lincoln's construction and the imagery of nationalism. In a sense, Lincoln tried to reconstruct a "natural" patriotism, to use Schaar's category, by reinventing America as a family living in a common home. True, Lincoln asserted his patriotism in terms of a devotion to the principles of the Declaration of Independence in his speech at Independence Hall in 1861, where he stopped en route to his inauguration as president. But Lincoln also understood that devotion to principle is vulnerable without an emotional bond. To that end, he had for some time been embarked upon what I would call the creation of an American myth. Two of the main texts in that process were his speech to the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois, in 1838, and the address at Gettysburg in 1864, both of which are cited by Schaar as constitutive of Lincoln's notion of covenanted patriotism.

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At Springfield, Lincoln spoke of his fear that as the direct experience of sacrifice and fraternity that had marked the Revolution died with the passing of a generation, Americans would forget the cause of freedom that they had made their particular identity. And so he was determined to transform experience into myth and thus to preserve it in another form. He called this myth "the political religion of the nation," and it consisted of a fusion of the language and imagery of politics with those of Christianity. Lincoln invoked the love of liberty and the blood of our ancestors, reverence for the law and the desire to "sacrifice unceasingly upon its altars" (Lincoln 1980, 5-8). Lincoln's own temple, his Memorial in Washington, D.C., enshrines this myth in the words of the Gettysburg Address, etched into its walls, and, as Lincoln would have wanted, into the memory of countless schoolchildren. The words are of liberty, equality, and freedom, but also of consecrated ground and honored sacrifice (231). Lincoln had earlier—in a speech delivered in 1858, also in Springfield, Illinois—provided us another image to place upon this rhetorical, blood-soaked ground. Borrowing a page from the Gospels, and in reference to the controversy over slavery, he intoned his prophecy that "a house divided against itself cannot stand" (53).

Schaar laments that the covenanted patriotism of Lincoln has become almost completely lost as the forces of liberalism and commerce have severed our connections to things, including our connection to the Declaration's principles. The vacancy has been filled by nationalism:

> Nationalism could triumph only when liberalism had proceeded so far in its work of breaking the bonds among men that new ones were needed to provide at least a minimum of warmth and some measure of connectedness and direction. In all the liberal states, the same two myths were forged to replace the broken links: nationalism was one; the cult of progress the other. (Schaar 1981, 298)

I think Schaar is basically correct, but Lincoln's myth is its own sort of consolation. It is fashioned expressly for America, and so it combines elements of freedom and fate. The secular part brings us back to that which was expressly made: to the Revolution and the Constitution. But to preserve what was made, and therefore what could be undone, requires something more, and that's where all the

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talk of blood comes in. By transforming those who came before us and who made the Revolution and the Constitution into our ancestors, Lincoln's myth ties us together into an American family. We become as brothers and sisters through our common heritage, united by the blood of those who died for our institutions just as Christians are united by the blood of Christ. As Christ's disciples were called to leave their biological families and to form a new family around him, so have we embellished Lincoln's version of the American ancestry to include the Founding Fathers, whose combination of moral purity, great words, and miraculous actions are to serve as our inspiration and compass. In both cases, the imagery of a "natural" family is carried over and transformed, through the omission of childbearing mothers, into a family that is formed partly out of choice and partly out of inner moral compulsion.

There is nothing particularly new about characterizing a political community as ethnically homogeneous or as descended from some common ancestry, either real or mythic. Pericles' funeral oration, like Lincoln's address at Gettysburg, called upon the citizens of Athens to remember both the longevity of their ancestors' residence in Attica and the sacrifices of their fathers in the wars with Persia, so as to steel them for the rigors of what to modern eyes appears a civil war with Sparta—a war among Greeks. Thucydides' rendition of that speech set the tone that can still be heard in Lincoln's Christianized version. But Lincoln's "house divided" imagery is another matter. Pericles was careful to separate what we would call the public and the private in his use of symbols. Lincoln conflated what Pericles kept apart: the city and the house. Perhaps because there was some sense to Pericles' claim that the Athenians were indeed ethnically related, he was able to invoke the special institutions of Athenian democracy as a parallel source of civic strength and identity to that of blood and to contain both sources within the idea of the city. Nowhere does he confuse the notion of a common heritage with the actual bonds of family. He addresses the parents, wives, sons, and brothers of the dead separately. The parents will grieve, he says, for what will be absent from their homes, while sons and brothers are exhorted not to denigrate their own future achievements in comparison with those of the dead. As for wives, Pericles devotes one sentence to the widows, advising them to disappear from public view.

Pericles left out any reference to the sisters and daughters of the

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dead, who are always forgotten by Athenian politicos and remembered by the tragedians. Tragedy dealt with the home, pictured as the out-of-memory monarchic household, and there Clytemnaestra, Antigone, Iphigenia, Elecktra, Medea, and their mothers, sisters, and daughters held the stage, often in direct conflict with the laws enacted by their male relations. These houses were always divided and usually fell, but the mere fact that these stories were enacted in Athens before an audience of citizens was testimony to the distinction between the house and the city. These households that brought ruin upon themselves and their cities were images from the remote past, when the immediate family relationships of monarchic houses were directly political ones. But it was precisely the tension between legal and familial relationships that characterized the democratic city.

Lincoln's undivided national house obliterates this distinction. In this sense, his Christian source is apt, since the Gospels recount that Jesus likened the house to a kingdom (in this case, Satan's kingdom), restoring the identity of the monarchic household with the political realm (Matt. 12:25; Mark 3:24-25). But while Jesus resorted to the metaphor of the house in defending himself against the charge that he was using Satanic power in order to dispel demons, Lincoln appropriated it in order to conjure images of stability, comfort, uniformity, and unquestioned affection because a family lives in that house. The nation is domesticated by the power of love and, conceptualized as a family, becomes an object of devotion. This is precisely the outcome Schaar fears, but it is contained within the covenanted patriotism he seeks to institute.

Schaar's distinction between land and city patriotism is itself the source of a conceptual problem. There is no patriotism of the land other than nationalism because such a sentiment requires a mythologizing of nature and of the relationship of the political community to it. The love of the patria, by contrast, is the love of something created and experienced in an immediate way. Pericles, like Machiavelli, may be taken as an exemplar of it. It is the city that is the embodiment of the patria, not the mythical national family ensconced on its magical bit of territory. The patria is to be loved precisely because it is not "natural" but something created, and hence existing in time. By linking the made with the natural, the political community with the family, Lincoln reiterated the national idea.

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"Without memory, there is no identity," John Schaar writes (309). But whose memory is this? The national memory is not ours. It is created out of abstraction and myth. Our memories are concrete, like those of Natalia Ginzburg. The concrete experience of the patria, however, is no longer available to most of us because we live in out-scaled, abstract nations. Instead, we have the myth of the national family. It can be an egalitarian, open family, or a hierarchic, closed one. Contrary to Michael Walzer, it seems the rhetoric of family is ubiquitous in America today, explicitly or implicitly invoked in movements and policies aimed at restricting immigration, punishing illegal "aliens," and in establishing English as the official language. Uprootedness takes its vengeance.

When Michael Ignatieff expresses his embarrassment at being a cosmopolitan—grandson of Russian immigrants, a Canadian citizen, resident of London—he grants too much to the myth of national identity, even as his book reveals the myth. Intellectuals live in cities, at least in their minds: not Plato's city, but a site of diverse experiences and knowledge, transcending the arbitrary borders of nations. It is a privilege to live there, but it is one we should exercise, not regret. We may not know what the patria is, because it is lost to us, as to everyone. But we should know an oxymoron when we see one.

NOTES

1. Greenfeld distinguishes between two types of civic nationalism, "individualistic-libertarian" and "collectivistic-authoritarian," which allows her to make distinctions between England or the United States, and France, respectively. Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 9-11.
2. All translations from the Italian are mine.
3. Witness Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 18: "I see modernity defined by nationalism."
4. Viroli 1995a, 39: "La patria è anche un modo di vita e una cultura, è un *particolare* modo di vita e una cultura che si fondano sui valori della libertà e dell'eguaglianza civile. Nella celebre lettera a Fancesco Vettori in cui Machiavelli scrive <<amo la mia patria più della mia anima>>, possiamo sostituire la parola 'patria' con <<vivere libero>> senza alterare il significato della frase, ma se sostituiamo 'patria' con 'nazione', le parole di Machiavelli non avrebbero senso."

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5. Viroli cites this passage from a secondary source and I have been unable to locate it in Ginzburg's works.
6. This is a conclusion to be drawn from Putnam 1993. Putnam's evidence of the effectiveness of local administration in northern Italy should also be seen in light of the fact that Italians consistently show more support in opinion polls for European unity than other EU member populations. This is perhaps reflected anecdotally in a comment made to me by a friend that he felt himself to be Florentine and European.
7. Walter Benjamin's comments on architecture are apposite here. See "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (Benjamin 1968).
8. It was at the University of Paris that the term "nation" was originally applied to a community of foreigners and referred to a common place of birth (Kedourie 1993, 5). Thus the scholastic meaning of *nation* places it in proximity to the German term *Heimat*, which like the English word *hamlet* connotes both home and native place. This is a tradition quite distinct from that of *patria*.
9. Schaar refers to D. H. Lawrence in support, and Lawrence's description of the Pilgrims and their successors captures Schaar's own sense of things: "They came largely to get *away*—that most simple of motives. To get away. Away from what? In the long run, away from themselves. Away from everything. That's why most people have come to America, and still do come. To get away from everything they are and have been" (Lawrence 1966, 298).

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Martin Tyrrell

NATION-STATES AND STATES OF MIND: NATIONALISM AS PSYCHOLOGY

ABSTRACT: *The rise of nationalism parallels that of the state, suggesting that the relationship between the two is symbiotic and that nations are neither natural nor spontaneous but rather are political constructions. Ernest Gellner's economically determinist account of the rise of the nation-state, however, understates the emotive and psychological appeal of nationalist ideology. The Social Identity Theory of Henri Tajfel, by contrast, suggests that nationalism benefits from possibly innate human tendencies to affiliate in social groups and to act in furtherance of these groups, while Serge Moscovici's social psychology of popular belief elucidates the means by which such tendencies can take the shape of nationalism in mass publics.*

In the eighteenth century, it was still possible for a British subject to travel through France at a time when France and Britain were at war. A century later, however, a holiday through hostile territory would have been madness. And so it has remained. Between the 1700s and the 1900s came nationalism and with it, large numbers of people, usually unrelated in any way and frequently quite dissimilar, began to make common cause with one another and with the state, *their* state. It is nationalism, more than any other political ideology, that has made the personal the political, making even the most apo-

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litical people identify with the polity. With nationalism, relations that were once local and interpersonal have become intergroup, and this intergroup context has become fundamental. If there is no "them," there is no "us."

Is nationalism inevitable, however? Many academic commentators would say that it is; that if it did not exist, it would be necessary to invent it. After all, once, when it did not exist, it *did* prove necessary to invent it. The necessity remains. Nationalism, once nowhere, is now everywhere. Today, "a man without a nation . . . provokes revulsion." So claims Ernest Gellner in *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), an almost a priori account of nationalism. In Gellner there is quite deliberately more historicism than history and scarcely a word about the likes of Herder, Fichte, and Mazzini. Nationalist ideologues, the author says, are too much a part of the phenomenon for their explanations to be trusted, and history is primarily an axe that they grind. In place of history and ideology, Gellner puts theory, a theory worth discussing. Central to Gellner's account is the phenomenon of the nation-state, which, to nationalists, represents the only legitimate form of political order. A nation-state is a state that includes all, or nearly all, of the members of a particular nation within its borders. In a nation-state, regardless of how greatly individual citizens might differ in terms of their wealth, power, or status, they will at least have their nationality—their national allegiance—in common. It is to this kind of state that all nationalists aspire and it is with deviations from this ideal that they take issue. To Gellner, the ubiquity of nationalism in modern times is no accident. It is the latest stage in a dynamic process of human social evolution whereby each in a succession of changing technologies—hunting and gathering, agriculture, industry—generates the need for a specific type of social and political order. Industry is the most recent of these technologies and nationalism is, he claims, the style of politics that suits it best. It is the nation-state that supplies the integrated, homogeneous society that industrialization demands.

States and Nations

In Gellner's account, nationalism has more to do with the state- and nation-building policies of governments and political movements (aspirant governments) than with either "ethnic" culture or spontaneous collective aspiration. Nations begin in politics, either

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the politics of the state or the politics of a movement that is, however implausibly, a state in waiting. They do not emerge out of culture. Many people today feel a strong sense of personal attachment to a particular national culture, but this is not *why* they live in a nation-state; it is the *result* of the fact that they do. Any national culture and any widespread sense of national identity go through much of their development after, rather than before, the nation-state is in place. Seen in this way, nationalism, so natural to its ideologues, becomes a highly artificial state of affairs, a political construction. Without politics, it is nowhere. Its rise has paralleled that of the state. And just as the wider state is a thing of comparatively recent times, so too is nationalism.

As Eric Hobsbawm (1990) has argued, it was only from the mid- to late 1800s (and then only in Western Europe, North America and Australasia—the "West") that the state began to play a role in the daily lives of the mass of the people. Only from the 1850s onwards were its agents everywhere. They administered law and order, delineated and defended borders, staffed schools and hospitals, collected taxes, and stood for election. They even delivered the mail. In the nineteenth century, much that had been apolitical was politicized and this, together with growing literacy and the rise of mass political participation, began to bring matters of state into every household. Every adult in Britain today knows the name of the prime minister; 200 years ago, many—perhaps most—would not have known what a prime minister was. It was in the context of the growing politicization of life that popular nationalism flourished. Gellner dates it from about 1800, but Hobsbawm (1983), Eugen Weber (1979), and Walker Connor (1990) all give good reasons for regarding it as a late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century phenomenon. Bastille Day, for example, became a regular French holiday only in 1880, at around the same time that the British royal family, hitherto a deeply unpopular institution, acquired its current range of public ceremonials. Only in the latter part of the century did the burgeoning state began to celebrate itself with public holidays and a make-believe antiquity. The rise of the mass media (usually under the direct or indirect supervision of the state) in the twentieth century has provided nationalism with a further catalyst. Without radio and, later, television, heads of state could not have made their increasingly avuncular addresses to the nation; political careers like those of Churchill, Roosevelt, or Kennedy could not have been staged; the state could not have pro-

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moted and publicized itself; the national economy could not as effectively have been depicted as a natural unit to be compared with other national economies in terms of GDP, inflation, the relative standing of the national currency and the balance of payments, all rendered graphically; and the vivid dramatization of competing national identities that is international sport could never have taken place. Events like the Olympic Games and the World Cup, and the strong nationalist passions to which they give rise, are aspects of a specifically twentieth-century form of nationalism. George Orwell, in his 1945 essay "The Sporting Spirit," wrote:

> At the international level sport is frankly mimic warfare. But the significant thing is not the behaviour of the players but the attitude of the spectators: and, behind the spectators, of the nations who work themselves into furies over these absurd contests and seriously believe—at any rate for short periods—that running, jumping and kicking a ball are tests of national virtue. . . . If you wanted to add to the vast fund of ill-will existing in the world at this moment, you could hardly do it better than by . . . sending forth a team of eleven men, labelled as national champions, to do battle against some rival team, and allowing it to be felt on all sides that whichever nation is defeated will "lose face." (Orwell 1970, 62–64)

If nationalism starts out as politics, then it soon becomes something else. Nationalism is politics with passion, a passion that other political creeds—communism, feminism, internationalism, liberalism—do not consistently possess to anything like the same extent. In opting for an explanation based firmly on social and economic undercurrents, Gellner and others say too little of nationalism as an idea and too little of the emotive power of that idea. Yet, compared with nationalism, said Orwell, "Christianity and international socialism"—market liberalism, too, one might add—"are weak as straw."

Marx may have recognized the threat posed by nationalism; Roman Szporluk (1988) sees the German nationalist Friedrich List as the unnamed target of *The Communist Manifesto*. Marx held that free trade would eventually undermine traditional cultures and loyalties and in so doing, make more explicit the fundamentally class-based nature of society. In a global free market, he argued, the reality that the working class had no nationality but labor and no government but capital would be obvious. Nationalism was, in comparison, simply a new kind of false consciousness. But List, unlike many na-

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tionalists, was neither a romantic nor an antiquarian. His argument—influential still—was that "infant industries" in latecomer capitalist economies needed to be protected from competitors if they were to mature. Whereas Marx held that it would be better for backward Germany to be taken over by internationalism, List favored the development of a national German economy via a government-sponsored program of national industrialization. Market liberals (and their erstwhile Marxist allies) could preach comparative advantage all they might; this national economy was what the people wanted. And by the 1920s, it was what the Marxists wanted too. Nationalism, not internationalism, was what took over and stayed in charge. Not every prospective nineteenth-century nation got a state, but many did, and it was largely on the basis of these states that twentieth-century capitalism and socialism developed. In the world today, no state has withered away. You can have any "ism" you like so long as you have a functioning nationalism first.

Thus, it would seem that Gellner's claim that industrialization fosters nationhood is mistaken. Perhaps on the contrary, nationalism sets limits on industrialization. Nationalism is *not* the style of politics that suits an industrial economy best; *internationalism* is. The latter offers the possibility of a universal culture—the "Coca Cola culture" of nationalist demonology—and a homogeneous world market. In practice, however, nationalism is what exists, and it is on the basis of the nation that industry has developed. In times of war, nationalists have been willing to sacrifice long-term economic development for the achievement of national goals. In that sense, war is bad economics; but it is also the nationalist argument followed to where it is going. So nationalism is bad economics, too.

Gellner's historicism fails to fully explain why nationalism rather than either Marxism or free-market internationalism should be one of the more enduring passions of recent times. The processes underlying the nation-state are not just historical, political, or economic; they are also *psychological.* Nations are everywhere—in the media, in history—but they are also nowhere. Nobody has ever seen a nation and nobody would be quite sure even if they had. "What is a nation?" asked Ernest Renan in 1882, and many have asked that since. It is not for want of effort that we are no closer to an answer. Benedict Anderson (1991) has the makings of an answer but to a very different question: not *what*, but *where* is the nation? It is all in the mind. The nation is imagination, an imagined community: "The members of even the smallest nation will never know

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most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson 1991, 6).

Psychology and Nationalism

The social psychologist Serge Moscovici and such colleagues as Charlan Nemeth, Gabriel Mugny, and Stamos Papastamou have developed a model of the psychological processes underlying social influence, processes that explain the development of widespread systems of belief. Moscovici (1976; 1985) contends that popular beliefs originate in the activities of minorities opposed to the prevailing consensus. Such minorities, he argues, are a facet of any intergroup situation, and their actions—indeed their very existence—are evidence that no consensus can ever be total. There are official (majority) and unofficial (minority) "ways of seeing" and frequent exposure to the latter can undermine a person's confidence in the former. Gabriel Mugny (1982) has developed this position. He says that minorities and majorities cannot be defined in strictly numerical terms. Rather, a "minority" is any group opposed to the existing ideological consensus; a "majority," any group that supports it. Both majorities and minorities are, in fact, numerically small; these terms simply name the groups who compete for the minds of the wider population. At the bottom of any process of social influence there is a relatively small social group, and all social influence is ultimately a process of minority influence.

Moscovici's theory of social representation (1981; 1984) addresses the consequences of this process of influence for the popular imagination, helping to explain the appeal of doctrines like nationalism. The precise claims of Moscovici's theory are not always particularly obvious. Like all the best gurus, Moscovici seems incapable of resisting that extra dash of ambiguity. One possible reading of the theory—*my* reading of it—is that a social representation is a kind of vulgarization of some more arcane concept or proposition. Moscovici is more or less saying that distortion invariably accompanies the popularization of ideas; any theory that becomes widely known will also be misunderstood and misinterpreted. In effect, therefore, he is telling (most of) his readers in advance that they are unlikely fully to grasp the actual meaning of his words (or those of anyone else) and that, over time, they might well lose his thread

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completely. (Perhaps this explains the author's ambiguity. After all, why aim for precision if part of your argument is that the people who read you are going to misinterpret what you actually said?)

Moscovici proposes (or seems to propose) that ordinary people evolve social representations over time by using what they glean from the media or learn at school as "food for thought." In this way, relatively obscure ideas are rendered more everyday or "colloquial." It is in representations grounded in a bedrock of the familiar that political positions, scientific theories, and events from history are made accessible. Delacroix's "Liberty Leading the People" both encapsulates and perpetuates a particularly romanticized view of the French revolution of 1830; "The Spirit of 1776" does much the same for the American Revolution. In Northern Ireland, the many stylized murals of King William III (William of Orange) might not be realistic but they are, nonetheless, more real to many than anything to be found in a history book. Only in Northern Ireland, consequently, do people know William well enough to call him "King Billy." Everywhere else—even in Holland—he is all but forgotten.

"Anchoring" is an important aspect of social representation. Moscovici claims that things that are unfamiliar are often translated into more familiar terms through being "anchored" in something supposedly analogous but actually commonplace. Religion is one of the heaviest anchors conceivable. Conor Cruise O'Brien (1989) observes that nationalism benefited from the demise of religion by becoming, in a sense, a kind of religion. In the aftermath of the Enlightenment, fewer and fewer people were inclined to take religion proper seriously. Nationalism helped fill the gap in part because it was popularized in a manner similar to that of Christianity centuries before. Christianity could not have progressed by theology alone; such aspects of popular devotionalism as hymn singing, the veneration of saints and their relics, pilgrimages to holy places, icons, and the appropriation of popular, pre-Christian festivals were crucial to its development as a mass movement. Likewise, all nationalisms have had their anthologies of patriotic songs, prose, and poetry; their national heroes; their monuments; and their borrowings.

Many national ceremonies incorporate religion more directly. Perhaps the key event in the mythos of Irish nationalism is the Easter Rising of 1916, the date of which was chosen with care: Nationalist insurgents decided that the national resurrection would

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happen on the anniversary of the Christian Resurrection. But Easter is a "movable feast" of the Catholic church and, as such, does not always fall on the same date every year, so the commemoration of the Rising also moves around. It is never celebrated on its secular anniversary (April 24). Even now, no one cares to upset the religious symbolism of the event. Polish nationalism has similar religious overtones. In Mickiewicz's poetry, for example, Poland is the suffering Christ awaiting resurrection, whilst the Black Madonna of Cziestochowa is as much a national as a religious icon.

Personification is one of the most common allegories by which something vague is anchored in the familiar, and it is a staple of nationalism. Most nationalist ideologies posit a very abstract ideal of the nation. O'Brien (1988; 1989) proposes that in the eighteenth century the state, which had hitherto been associated with the sovereign, began to be associated instead with the sovereign people or citizenry. Where once kings had ruled, now it was the turn of the people to do so through a republican state that embodied the Rousseauian "general will." But the general will is ultimately as abstract and unsatisfactory a concept as, say, Divine Right. It implies that a nation is some kind of popular consensus, something that no nation can ever be. The nation-state in practice is not what it is in theory. Government, however national, is not the general will but the will of some exercised over the wills of many. Ideally the state does what you will, but often in the end it wills what you do. The general will exists only as part of the ideological context in which this occurs. It represents the nation as a kind of thing-in-itself exists above and beyond, not to say before and after, the lives of any of its individual members.

Elie Kedourie (1993) suggests that this abstract aspect of nationalism derives largely from the works of such post-Kantian German philosophers as Fichte and Schelling. For them, the Kantian *noumenon*—the thing-in-itself that is outside the world of appearances and thus beyond time and space—becomes a kind of national essence, of which the individuals are the phenomenal manifestation. From this comes the rather nebulous idea of the nation as a somehow transhistorical entity, an enduring whole greater than the sum of its ephemeral parts.

The results of this kind of theorizing are never easy to visualize, even, I rather suspect, for the people most prone to it. If the nation is more than just the sum total of the men, women, and children who comprise it, if it is not merely a quantity but a quality as well,

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what is this quality? It appears to be too abstract and metaphysical for scientific or historical study, as inaccessible as a Platonic Form. Personification of the nation gets rid of the immediate problem or, at least, renders it more tolerable, if not more soluble. In this case, personification involves the anchoring of unfamiliar concepts drawn from nineteenth-century German Idealism in the most familiar thing of all—people. Nations are frequently personified as a kind of immortal parent, a "fatherland" or "motherland." Fatherlands and motherlands are born and reborn; they rise and they sleep; sometimes they swell with pride but, on other occasions, they shrink in humiliation. From time to time they die (only to be resurrected). Open almost any history book or newspaper and there they will be. "Sweden" was "mistress of the Baltic" in the seventeenth century; "France" was "humiliated" in the Seven Years War; "Turkey" was "the sick man of Europe"; "Italy," "reborn" in the 1500s, was resurrected in the 1860s; "little Belgium" defied the bullying "Germany" in 1914. I particularly like this last representation because it involves two distinct "characters," anchored in a familiar and enduring story—David and Goliath; top dog and underdog, Tom and Jerry. This is how the event was represented in the famous (and politically influential) "Bravo Belgium!" cartoon from *Punch*—Belgium as a weedy-looking peasant boy guarding the gateway to a field, determinedly shaking a stick at Germany, a fierce, bloated old Junker with a cudgel.

The idea of the nation as a whole greater than any or all of its constituent parts is not the only aspect of nationalist ideology to generate social representations. One of the most important kinds of representation is that of history, not as an account of what actually happened, but as a more nationalistically satisfying myth. George Wells (1991) notes the minimal factual historical basis to the Swiss national myth of William Tell; similarly, little historical basis exists for English national myths such as those of King Arthur and Robin Hood. The Second World War has generated a plethora of historical myths that have yet to be really disestablished: the French Resistance; the Battle of Britain; Churchill as courageous war leader; the classless solidarity of Londoners during the Blitz. Increasingly, it would appear that all of these had their origins in British propaganda at a time (1941) when the war was all but lost (Charmley 1993; Ponting 1994).

Territory is another important strand in nationalist thought and in nationalist representations. Without territory, after all, there can be

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no nation, and often the very shape of a nation's national territory comes to function as a powerful signifier of that nation. Anderson (1991) notes the importance of maps in nationalist iconography. With maps, the nation can be imagined as recognizable, "bounded territorial space" (173). Maps can even serve as a kind of logo:

> In the final form all explanatory glosses could be summarily removed: lines of longitude and latitude; place names, signs for rivers, seas and mountains, neighbours. Pure sign, no longer compass to the world. In this shape, the map entered an infinitely reproducible series, available for transfer to posters, official seals, letterheads. . . . Instantly recognisable, everywhere visible, the logo-map penetrated deep into the popular imagination forming a powerful emblem. (175)

The island of Cyprus features on the Cypriot flag, whilst the island of Ireland turned up on the first postage stamps issued by the Irish state after independence. Neither government controlled the entire emblematic territory. Both, however, aspired (and aspire) to do so.

It is precisely in these situations of disputed territory that the doctrine of national frontiers is most often invoked. This doctrine holds that national homelands have been somehow set apart from the rest of the world by a natural barrier. In this way, various geographical and agricultural accidents are invested with a deep ideological significance. It is easy to mock imaginings of this kind, but they are commonplaces of nationalism. Most nationalist ideologies are full of attempts to find these territorial markers; these efforts sometimes lead to the view that the landscape of the home territory is vastly superior to that of any other place. Finding a positive distinction somewhere—anywhere—is an important way in which the collective identity of the national in-group can be asserted and the perceived superiority of "us" over "them" maintained among its members. Joshua Fishman (1963) demonstrates how nationalists, confronted with a range of national flags, will often assert that the flag of their own nation is superior to the others. The individual designs, because of what they signify, acquire a sentimental "charge" that leads people to adopt what Fishman calls an "ideologized position" towards them. Henri Tajfel (1981) reports similar ideologization among children presented with maps of different countries. Like the royal children in *The King and I*, they tended to overstate the size of their own national territory relative to others and took some persuading that this was not the case.

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Social Identity Theory

Effects like those noted by Tajfel and Fishman have both a cognitive and a behavioral component. The cognitive element is the idea of the group in the minds of those individuals who feel that they are its members, together with its corollary, the idea that there are other, similar groups in the world. And though large groups like nations cannot be known in any literal sense—that is, "one member at a time"—Moscovici's Social Representations Theory suggests that a nation can be known in representational ways: as a kind of person with quasihuman characteristics; as an iconic territory; as myth; and as an imagined community. A group such as a nation only really matters, only really has life, when it is an idea or a representation in the minds of a great many individuals. Where nationalism is concerned, the group is in the individual more than the other way around.

Muzafer Sherif (1956) was among the first social psychologists to investigate the phenomena of group identity and pro-in-group behavior. In Sherif's experiments, boys attending holiday camps were divided, on a purely random basis, into two distinct groups. By way of further differentiation, these groups were given names, colors, and emblems. They were then required to participate in various competitive games and tasks, and their attitudes and conduct were surreptitiously monitored and recorded. Typically, there was a gradual deterioration in intergroup relations, with attitudinal hostility progressing to outbreaks of verbal and even physical animosity.

Sherif's conclusion was that the competitive nature of the situations into which he had brought the groups was the source of all the subsequent antipathy. Others have also noted the ill effects of this kind of competition in intergroup contexts. However, Michael Billig (1976), in a comprehensive analysis of Sherif's findings, concludes that in several instances, the first stirrings of intergroup hostility could be identified well in advance of the start of any overtly competitive activities. In Billig's view, the mere fact that there were two distinct groups by itself seemed sufficient to cause animosity. Competition simply exacerbated the kind of mutual dislike already caused by the unambiguous intergroup context. Where there are groups, Billig argues, there is likely to be straightaway some degree of intergroup conflict, as individuals relate to each other, in the first instance, not as individuals at all, but as members of their respective collectives, agents of social groups, or real-life representatives of

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imagined communities.[1] Billig comments that a "feeling of solidarity might, in its starkest form, be associated with the label of group membership rather than any significant social facts underlying that label" (Billig 1976, 334).

It is this kind of effect that Tajfel and his various students and coworkers have studied. Out of this research has come Social Identity Theory (SIT), probably the most important research paradigm in European social psychology today.[2]

SIT draws a distinction between personal and social identity. Social identities derive from membership in particular social collectives. This means that most people will have many social identities, deriving from the numerous groups of which they are members. Membership in a family, a church, or a club will confer a social identity, but it is the social identities deriving from racial or national groups that tend to be the most important. This is because these latter identities are less escapable than the others and there are relatively few social contexts in which they are not, to some extent, salient. The world in which we live is a world of nation-states and would-be nation-states. For this reason, it is difficult for people not to think nationalistically and to feel loyalties toward and affinities with their given (if "imagined") national community.

In SIT, social identity is an integral aspect of an overall sense of self. Moreover, just as people can feel good or bad about themselves at the personal level, so, too, can their social identities be a source of positive or negative self-esteem. The degree of esteem arising from membership in a group is proportional to the current standing of that group in the wider world. The nationals of a "second-league" nation-state, the argument runs, cannot possess as much self-esteem as those of a "first-division" nation-state; this should remain true however much and however often those nationals might succeed at the personal level.

However much I might dislike being seen as part of a particular group, though, there will always be those who insist on categorizing me among its members and dealing with me on the basis of this categorization. There are some social identities that, try as we might, we shall never be allowed to shake off. Their permanence limits our options in dealing with them. For some social identity theorists, the option most often pursued is to become *engagé* in the contest between our own and other social groups. Only by doing so can we enhance the standing of the in-group and thereby im-

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prove the sense of identity it affords us. But benefiting the in-group in this way can often entail undermining an out-group.

The rise of German nationalism in the nineteenth century offers a good historical example of this phenomenon. Late in the previous century, German intellectuals, influenced by Immanuel Kant's *Perpetual Peace* (1794), aspired to the creation of a universal republic and saw in Revolutionary France the first stirrings of such a state (Kedourie 1993). In the event, however, the political development of France took quite a different turn. Far from becoming a universal home for the disaffected radical—a "Vatican of Reason"—Revolutionary France proved to be merely a more efficient imperial power than its Bourbon predecessor. It made the advancement of French culture and the French state, and the expansion of this state to fit generously defined "natural frontiers," its principal objectives. By the mid-1790s, Republican France was executing its foreign *admirers* on suspicion of treachery and exacting tribute from its so-called *républiques soeurs* (O'Brien 1989). By the early 1800s, France had abandoned even the pretense of being a republic.

It was the sight of its imperial army in Berlin that prompted Fichte's *Address to the German Nation*. Seeing what a self-styled *grande nation* could achieve, he and many others sought to reinvent Germany along the same lines as France. If the French had made citizenship dependent upon ethnic and linguistic criteria, then so, too, would the Germans. Herder's recommendation that Germans —previously francophile and francophone—speak German, not French ("Spew out the ugly green slime of the Seine; German, speak German!") began to be acted upon. If the German radicals could not have a homeland in France, they would have it in Germany. Ernest Mortiz Arndt, in *The German's Fatherland* (1813), gave Germany generous natural frontiers. German intellectuals' embrace of nationalism was, then, a reaction to the French volte-face of the 1790s. What sense could there be in Germans remaining loyal to a universalist principles that had been abandoned by the state that had promulgated them? The defense of the German identity against the French required that Germany become itself a kind of France.

Other, more intriguing, support for SIT comes from the series of empirical studies carried out from the late 1960s onwards for which SIT is known, if at all, beyond social psychology. Tajfel and others at Bristol University used these experiments to text the Minimal Group Paradigm (MGP). Tajfel had his volunteers assigned to groups either at random or on the basis of some trivial criterion.

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(In one experiment, assignment depended on whether the participant preferred a painting by Klee to one by Kandinsky.) This procedure ensured that the groups in the MGP experiments were genuinely "minimal." Having no historical or sociocultural significance, they could reasonably be expected to excite no loyalty or affinity among their members beyond that which occurs naturally (the independent variable).

Once a volunteer had been assigned to a minimal group, he was asked to allocate points between two anonymous people. These people were never seen and the participant was told nothing about them except that one was a member of the in-group, the other a member of the out-group. Points were allocated using a "distribution matrix" featuring various pairs of points. The participant selected a pair of points on the understanding that the first of the pair would go to the in-group member and the second to the out-group member. Each pair of points on the distribution matrix was designed to allow the participant the opportunity to adopt a particular allocation strategy. Various allocations were possible: "fairness" (an equitable distribution of points); "maximum joint profit" (the pair of points with the largest overall total, regardless of which recipient ended up with the most); "maximum in-group profit"; and "maximum difference" (the allocation that created the greatest possible relative superiority for the in-group).

The "fair" strategy and the maximum difference strategy were of particular importance in the MGP research. If participants adopted a strategy of fairness, the in-group recipient tended to receive *numerically* more points than if the maximum difference strategy were followed. Maximum difference merely established a *relative* advantage for the in-group, and the cost of this advantage was the extra points that would have been gained had a strategy of fairness been pursued. Hence, to discriminate was to incur a cost. Surprisingly, perhaps, successive MGP replications have generally shown that a majority of participants prefer a policy of maximum difference to one of fairness. In effect, most MGP volunteers have felt that the price of discrimination is one that is worth paying.

The implication of SIT is, then, that to have a social identity—whether a "real" social identity or one assigned in a laboratory experiment—is to act in furtherance of such an identity or of the group to which that identity refers, however unfair or even self-denying that action might be. When a person is conscious of belonging to a group, when a group is "in" that person, then there is

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strong motivation to behave in ways that benefit the group *at the expense of others*. If this tendency is not innate, it is at the very least one that is quickly and comprehensively acquired.

The Need for Psychological Explanations

Marxism aims ultimately for anarchy, whilst market liberalism looks forward to a future in which there will be, if not *no* government, then at least *less* government. Neither of these aspirations appears likely to be fulfilled. We live in a world in which the principal opposition to any particular state tends to come from some other state or some would-be state, and where politics dominates economics, not the other way around. Since the end of the last century, economies—*national* economies—have always taken shape within limits set by politics. This is why Gellner is mistaken in locating the source of nationalism in the economy. The source is the spread of the state into more and more areas of everyday life. The state politicizes, and nationalism is the result of that politicization. The economy is just one more area that gets "taken over" by nationalism.

Against the view of "modernist" scholars, such as Gellner and Hobsbawm, who hold that nationalism is recent and that national cultures are largely manufactured, "ethnicists" like John Armstrong (1982) and Anthony Smith (1991; 1994) view national communities as developing out of earlier, ethnic communities. In practice, however, there is little difference between these two positions. Even Gellner, seen by some ethnicists (Hutchinson 1994) as the most doctrinaire of the modernists, accepts the role of premodern communal affinities in the development of modern national societies. Similarly, all of the ethnicists would accept that nationalism necessarily entailed a break with the ethnic communities of the past. Nationality might draw upon ethnicity but it is not, itself, ethnicity. In fact, I would argue that nationalists, in their desire to create a homogeneous society, are frequently more destructive than preservative of earlier ethnic cultures.

At any rate, neither modernism nor ethnicism can, in the end, explain the enduring appeal of nationalism. This is not to say that some of its attraction cannot be attributed to the fact that it is, in part, old—although another part of its appeal is that it is, in part, new. But the power of nationalism cannot be mainly ascribed to primordial ethnic ties (too little of it is genuinely old) any more

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than to its novelty (other novelties have come and gone). A likely candidate for a deeper source is the psychology described by SIT and by Moscovici's Social Representations Theory. The tendency to align with an in-group and to acquire a social identity based upon that in-group is a plausible basis for national loyalty, while the tendency to conceptualize the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar explains why the concept of the nation as a transhistorical, suprahuman entity is digestible.

The implication of Tajfel's research is that people will affiliate with even the most trivial of social groups and will develop strong loyalties in favor of those groups. Because the fate of the group will have ramifications for its individual members' self-esteem, they are likely to discriminate against people whom they have never met and about whom they know nothing except that they are members of an out-group. In a context of in-groups and out-groups, the preservation of the social identity that the in-group affords its individual members will ensure that they behave in ways that benefit the in-group at the expense of others. And if this is what happens based on membership in *minimal* groups, how much more will it happen when the groups to which people belong have been promoted and popularized by culture and state all of people's lives? Nationalism is not the form of politics that suits industrialization best; it is the form of politics best placed to benefit from the tendencies uncovered by the minimal-group experiments.

The nation-state is ubiquitous. All of the many things it touches become politicized in the national interest: sport, the arts, language, even the food we eat and the currency—the *national* currency—we earn and spend. Airports, hospitals, and hydroelectric power stations operated by a nation-state cannot simply be utilities; they become sources of national pride (or embarrassment). Nationalists, and even ordinary nationals, are often able to tell foreign visitors that a particular airport or hospital or power plant is the largest or the busiest or the most advanced in the world. The other political ideologies are as indifferent to such comparisons as to the nationality of athletes. Socialists used to support the ideal of an international language, and by the universalist logic of both Marxism and liberalism neither language nor culture should have any national basis. But the logic of nationalism is precisely to confer significance on real and imagined particularity, beginning with place of birth and residence.

The implication of Tajfel's findings is that if language or banknotes or cuisine or styles of dress or architecture or football teams

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come to be seen as *our* language, *our* banknotes, and so forth, as distinct from *theirs,* then they are instantly engaged in the implicit competition that goes on wherever the context is one of us and them. And in a world of nations, that is always the context. Nations, once established, will not be so readily disestablished.

NOTES

1. Similarly, Gellner argues that mass national identification exists after and not before the political creation of the nation as an idea, an ideal, and a polity.
2. My account of the research in this area ia based on Hogg and Abrams 1988, which (in spite of possible normative weaknesses) provides a comprehensive summary of SIT research.

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Damian Tambini

EXPLAINING MONOCULTURALISM: BEYOND GELLNER'S THEORY OF NATIONALISM

ABSTRACT: *For Ernest Gellner, nationalism occurs in the modern period because industrial societies, unlike agrarian ones, need homogeneous languages and cultures in order to work efficiently. Thus, states and intellectuals mobilize campaigns of assimilation through public education and the culture industries. Gellner's theory, however, fails to explain all forms of nationalism, is overly materialist, and at times relies on dubious functionalist explanations. A more satisfactory theory would take into account the cultural content of nationalism—not only myths, but political culture—as well as phenomena of identity and collective action.*

The modern era has witnessed repeated crusades of cultural assimilation and ethnic cleansing, driven by the demand that every state have its own homogeneous culture and every culture its own state. This demand is peculiarly modern; previous states made no demands on culture as such, content to rule over culturally heterogeneous empires.

The late Ernest Gellner developed one of the most compelling, and one of the simplest, theories of the nationalist drive to cultural homogeneity.[1] In this essay I will argue that his theory, as it stands,

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is insufficient as an explanation of nationalism. It leaves out key motivations of nationalists, such as the demand for recognition, and ignores the aspects of nationalism related to collective identity, as well as nationalist concerns with civic culture and democratization. Gellner's theory has difficulty reconciling intention, function, and structure. After reviewing Gellner's approach, I will make suggestions as to how it can be improved upon.

Gellner's initial aim is to debunk the common-sense claim that nations are natural and universal units of human solidarity. He does so by linking nationalism to a contingent historical process: industrialization. "Nationalism," writes Gellner, "is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness. It invents nations where they do not exist" (Gellner 1964, 168). Nationalism itself, however, is no arbitrary invention.

> Dead languages can be revived, traditions invented, quite fictitious pristine purities restored. But this culturally creative, fanciful, positively inventive aspect of nationalist ardor ought not allow anyone to conclude, erroneously, that nationalism is a contingent, artificial, ideological invention, which might not have happened, if only those damned busy-body European thinkers, not content to leave well alone, had not concocted it and fatefully injected it into the bloodstream of otherwise viable political communities. (Gellner 1983, 56)

Gellner's theory was framed in this way in a polemic against his contemporaries. Some at the time took a more idealist position, explaining nationalism as the work of philosophers (Kedourie 1993 [1966]). Others defended an endogenous, primordialist position, positing premodern ethnic identity as a necessary condition of nationalist mobilization (Smith 1984) and supporting common-sense notions of nations as natural and inevitable aspects of human existence. In outlining his theory of the material bases of nationalism, Gellner attacked Kedourie's neglect of the structural:

> There is something bizarre in the suggestion that a force so widespread and pervasive, a flame that springs up so strongly and spontaneously in so many disconnected places, and which needs so very little fanning to become a devouring forest blaze, should spring from nothing more than some extremely obtrusive lucubrations of philosophers. (Gellner 1983, 125–26)

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Although the core of the theory seems to consist simply in a functional account of culture's new role in industrial societies, Gellner's theory in fact uses three interlocked forms of explanation. In the first place is the assertion that modern industrial society is well served by homogeneous culture, since it is the first type of society based on a system of production that requires complex symbolic communication over large spaces. This is the functionalist argument. Second, there is an argument about social structure, asserting that nationalism is a result of the fact that industrialism proceeds unevenly, resulting in marked regional disparities in wealth. This leads to the third aspect, an explanation of intentions; Gellner at various points claims that intellectuals and proletarians foment nationalism because it serves their direct material interests, and that states deliberately homogenize culture through mass education and the media.

The continuing appeal and resilience of Gellner's theory results from its integration of these three forms of explanation into a single account of nationalism. As I will show, however, there are problems and internal contradictions with using such explanations together; and, even given this battery of arguments, the theory needs to be expanded if it is to explain all forms of nationalism.

It is essential to engage critically with Gellner's work because his theory, which has been very influential, leads to a kind of fatalism. The upshot of the theory is that there will be an irresistible urge to nationalist cultural homogenization in any industrializing region. As Gellner himself said in 1993, nationalist claims will emerge wherever industrialization does, and there is no independent way of assessing them: "It is bloody war that decides" (Gellner 1994b). Commenting on the success of nationalist politics in Eastern Europe at the demise of the Soviet Union, he noted that "the appeal of the nationalist principle—one culture, one state—seems to be an inescapable corollary of the new socioeconomic order, carried along by industrialism, and even by the shadow that industrialism casts ahead of itself" (Gellner 1991, 129).

Industrialization and the Function of Culture

Gellner explains why modernity gave rise to the nationalist impulse by contrasting the function served by culture in industrial societies with the function it served previously. Before the industrial age,

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culture existed independently of states, "wild." With industrialization, states required more homogeneous, cultivated "gardens" of culture, because industrial society demanded more sophisticated communication over broader areas. Nationalism simply rationalized culture and politics along those lines, by demanding that state and culture be congruent. "To endow a culture with its own political roof" (Gellner 1983, 43) is Gellner's metaphor for the goal of the nation-building process.

> Nationalism—the principle of homogeneous cultural units as the foundations of political life, and of the obligatory cultural unity of rulers and ruled—is indeed inscribed neither in the nature of things, nor in the hearts of men, nor in the pre-conditions of social life in general, and the contention that it is so inscribed is a falsehood which nationalist doctrine has succeeded in presenting as self-evident. But nationalism as a phenomenon, not as a doctrine presented by nationalists, is inherent in a certain set of social conditions; and those conditions, it so happens, are the conditions of our time. (Gellner 1983, 125)

For Gellner it is the move from simple agrarian to complex industrial society that creates the need for a homogeneous culture under a single state. While peasants "grunt" to communicate, according to Gellner, the industrial workforce needs complex language.

> The capacity to move between diverse jobs, and incidentally to communicate and co-operate with numerous individuals in other social positions, requires that members of such a society be able to communicate, in speech and writing, in a formal, precise, context-free manner—in other words they must be educated, literate and capable of orderly, standardized presentation of messages. (Gellner 1982, 174)

When this competence becomes the ticket to affluence for individuals and states, the race to homogenize is on. Peripheral languages and dialects are forgotten as the state education and media system take on the responsibility for managing culture. So for Gellner, the coincidence of state sovereignty and culture in nations arises because "the economy needs both the new type of culture and the central state, the culture needs the state, and the state probably needs the homogeneous cultural branding of the flock" (Gellner 1983, 139).

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While the claims of nationalists regarding "authentic" culture, history, and language are often dubious for Gellner, the process of nationalism in general is firmly based in structural change. The debunking of nationalist "inventions" can therefore at most ridicule, but not remove, the nationalist imperative for culturally homogeneous states in industrial or industrializing regions.

"Nationalism," according to Gellner, "is a phenomenon connected not so much with industrialization or modernization as such, but with its uneven diffusion" (Gellner 1964, 67). Two conditions are necessary for nationalism in this theory: uneven industrial development and a degree of cultural heterogeneity between center and periphery. Uneven industrialization creates stratification between industrialized and nonindustrialized areas. Where a rural periphery is excluded from the benefits of industrialization, this might result in rural-urban migration. However, where the rural population (1) is excluded on the basis of cultural, physical, or linguistic attributes, and (2) can use these attributes as a resource in political organization, then nationalist movements are likely to result.

Gellner's argument that industrial societies work more efficiently with homogenized culture is reasonably convincing (in spite of the success of industrial Switzerland and Belgium). That the cultural requirements of industrialization explain nationalism, however, does not necessarily follow. Insofar as Gellner's theory asserts that monoculturalism becomes the norm *because* it serves a useful function in modern industrial society, the theory may be accused of relying on functionalist explanation, exposing it to all the criticisms of functionalism raised by Jon Elster (1979) and Gerry Cohen (1981). An explanation of a phenomenon in terms of its function, or beneficial consequences, must, Elster showed, include a description of how those beneficial consequences "feed back" into the causes that brought it into existence. This would demand that Gellner account for the motivations of nationalist politicians and intellectuals. The same goes for his argument about the rural poor: it needs to be demonstrated that they *see* nationalism as the way out.

Gellner gets around such problems by arguing that the structure of industrial society makes the "nationalist imperative" (one culture, one state) binding for all, such that the process of nationalist invention results from individual and collective actors' following this imperative.

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> In [industrial] conditions, men will to be politically united with all those, and only those, who share their culture. Polities then will to extend their boundaries to the limits of their cultures, and to protect and impose their culture within the boundaries of their power. The fusion of will, culture and polity becomes the norm, and not one easily or frequently defied. (Gellner 1983, 55)

Gellner mentions various actors—the proletariat, the intelligentsia, and the state, for instance. But he is never happy with the assertion that these agents are simply acting on the basis of a calculation of future utility. Most of the time "nationalism" itself is given the role of actor: "It is nationalism which engenders nations, not the other way round. Nationalism uses the pre-existing, historically inherited proliferation of cultures or cultural wealth" (ibid., 56).

States have used culture, in Gellner's account, to deliberately rationalize their societies—to render them "frictionless." This has also been the role of nationalist intellectuals, who have adopted a mission of generalizing national high cultures (with sprigs of sanitized folk culture) to all. The nationalist imperative has been executed by a "national education and communications system [whose] only effective keeper and protector is the state" (Gellner 1983, 52). The broad mass of nationalists, however, have had their own motivations. "When labor migration and bureaucratic employment became prominent features within their social horizon, they soon learned the difference between dealing with a co-national, one understanding and sympathizing with their culture, and someone hostile to it" (ibid., 61). The majority of individuals have thus become supporters of the nationalist drive because of their daily experience of misunderstanding and prejudice. In Gellner's terms, they have come to love their culture, whereas previously they had been unconscious of its existence.

The Limitations of Gellner's Model

Gellner's theory is simple, elegant, and compelling. It operates on a level of generalization without rivals in the field, and promises to explain a huge range of phenomena in very simple terms. Yet it leaves certain cases of intense nationalism unexplained and more generally fails to specify who the nationalist actors are, the nature of

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their motivations and intentions, and what, in concrete empirical terms, constitutes the nationalist imperative. Furthermore, it assumes a strong link between state and industrial interests, one that may be less important in an age of transnational capital. And the theory offers no evidence regarding the direction of causality. Cultural homogeneity may be a result, not a precondition, of industrialization.

Gellner's theory could be challenged simply because it leaves many cases of nationalist action unexplained. Nationalist political movements seem to occur where the particular conditions Gellner (1983) describes as "supremely important"—industrialization coupled with linguistic diversity—are absent; and nationalism does not occur in every case where they are present. His stress on linguistic homogeneity leads to difficulty in explaining cases of nationalist mobilization and claims-making where language is not a factor, for example in Scotland. This fact should lead us immediately to question Gellner's fatalism. Further, there are many instances of nationalism in which linguistic claims made in the name of a minority language arguably arrested the linguistic homogenization necessary for industrialization, as in Catalonia and Ireland (where the state language was actually spoken by the majority of the national group, including many of the most active nationalists.) As Gellner himself notes, "Dead languages can be revived." But this goes against Gellner's view of nationalism as "an industrial lubricant" (Kedourie 1993). Two aspects of Gellner's theory may thus contradict one another. Linguistic revivals in Ireland and Wales, for example, were not functional for industrialization. Quite the opposite. In many cases, moreover, nationalist protests against foreign rule were made prior to the development of a cultural/linguistic movement (e.g., in Italy) and prior to industrialization. Post-Soviet nationalism and recent separatism in Quebec, Lombardy, and other regions also do not seem to be explicable within Gellner's framework. Such movements often occur in relatively industrialized regions (Lombardy and Catalonia, for instance, and arguably the Czech region in recent years), and are supported by the rich, rather than the excluded.[2]

Nationalists are often more concerned with problems of recognition and civic culture than with industrialization or social mobility. Could it be that whereas the emergence of the national imperative was tied to industrialism, subsequent nationalist developments have some autonomy from industrialization? It does not follow from

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Gellner's claim that industrialization will always be accompanied by nationalism that nationalism occurs only where industrialization is an immediate cause. This problem is evident when one examines cases of preindustrial nationalism. That Gellner's framework may run into problems also in postindustrial settings has only recently been explored (Bauman 1990, 167–68).

Is Nationalism a Strategy?

Gellner refers to ideal types and posited entities, "polities" and "Ruritanians," rather than to empirical examples. He does refer to social groups such as intellectuals and the proletariat in general terms as the "carriers" of nationalism, but admits that his theory fails to account for when or why they will act: "That the principle of nationalism will be operative can be predicted; just which groupings will emerge as its carriers can only be loosely indicated, for it depends on too many historical contingencies" (Gellner 1983, 47). This, arguably, is why Gellner so often specifies nationalism itself as an actor in his writing: "Nationalism invents nations" (Gellner 1964, 168); "nationalism uses culture" (Gellner 1983, 56). Out of context, such claims seem sociologically weak; given his well-known materialism, it is revealing that Gellner permits the principle of nationalism to be an agent at all (without ever explaining exactly what this principle is).

Gellner sometimes emphasizes that particular groups benefit from the development of a state-culture link.

> For the intellectuals, independence means an immediate and enormous advantage: jobs, and very good jobs. The very numerical weakness of an 'underdeveloped' intelligentsia is its greatest asset: by creating a national unit whose frontiers become in effect closed to foreign talent . . . they create a magnificent monopoly for themselves." (Gellner 1964, 169)

One wonders why Gellner makes such claims, however, when confronted with his energetic denial of the role of intentionality in his theory: "There is . . . no need to assume any conscious long-term calculation of interest on anyone's part" (Gellner 1983, 63). Gellner seems to want to have his cake and eat it, too. He clearly implies that agents mobilize nationalism for their own benefit, but wants to exclude any form of explanation reliant on individual strategizing.

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That actors are nationalist for material gain alone is indeed unconvincing, but as recent developments in rational choice theory have shown, material benefits are only one of the goals individuals may seek (Elster 1990), and economic strategies can be mingled with other forms of motivation. Either way, though, there are problems with Gellner's theory. The conspiracy of intellectuals thesis may apply to separatist nationalism, but it is contradicted by cases of unification nationalism, where the end result will be to share intellectual work with those previously defined as foreigners.

It is not enough to claim, as Gellner does in defending his neglect of empirical cases and his vagueness on agency, that a lower level of generalization is simply not possible. "The emergence of that distinct social unit, the national and often nationalist state . . . cannot be explained by invoking historical events alone, but only by highlighting the difference between the two contrasted structures," industrial and agrarian society (Gellner 1982, 172). This is not an argument against specifying, for some individual cases, who the actors are, which can be done without making any general claims. The problem lies in Gellner's method: with no concrete examples, the burden remains on the functionalist argument.

The same applies to Gellner's argument about education, literacy, and nationalism. The central claim is that literacy is a basic condition of full citizenship in the modern era. Without this skill, an individual is not a fully human being. Therefore, national education systems (as opposed to, say, education by villages or clans) are necessary for the making of modern people. Here again the logic is functionalist: there remains the problem of demonstrating that education and media systems do in fact act in state or industrial interests. In some cases this is clear, but in many others the education system remained largely in the hands of churches or private interests until the national movement was already well institutionalized.

Beyond Gellner

It may be that the Gellner thesis only applied to an earlier stage in the development of industrialism in Europe, and that its application even in currently industrializing areas is limited, especially given trends toward the uncoupling of industrial capital from national states and the globalization of cultural exchange. Such conditions

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problematize explanations of contemporary cases of nationalism that assume that state educational and cultural policy will serve the interests of industrial capital. Gellner's own empirical work is not sufficient to allay such doubts, although other sources provide evidence that some nationalist leaders do work from an industrialist agenda.[3] Even to show that nationalism was intended to aid industrialization, however, is not to explain why nationalist projects gain so much popular support, nor why the support can be so fervent, well organized, and effective.

Given the interrelatedness of the various processes—industrialization, urbanization, democratization—that fall under the category of "modernization," it is difficult to isolate the homogenization of culture as a precondition for industrial organization. It is clear, however, that cultural and linguistic homogenization are *consequences* of modernization. Thus Gellner may simply be inverting cause and effect.[4] As John Hutchinson (1995, 21) notes, "Gellner's difficulties are not just that in many contexts (e.g., Eastern Europe) nationalism predates industrialism, but that there appears to be no causal link between early industrialization and mass education. Britain, the pioneer industrializer, did not develop such a system until the 1870s."

The problems with Gellner's theory thus center around a lack of empirical instantiation of the theory, a corresponding vagueness about agency and intentionality, and a stubborn, arguably unwarranted defense of materialism.

The core problem is that for Gellner, everything must be explained by reference to industrialism. He refuses to allow for a relatively independent role for ideas in effecting change, despite his key concept of the national imperative, which clearly refers to the institutionalization of a theoretical construct. His denial of the role of intentionality, and his insistence on a narrow reduction of modernity to industrial society, result in an elegant theory but a rather unconvincing fit between it and the realities of nationalism. Let us turn, then, to some ways in which Gellner's basic framework for interpreting nationalism needs to be developed.

First, we need a broader definition of nationalism. Homogeneous culture is only part of the story; nationalists are also concerned with collective identity and a canon of cultural symbols and myths. Second, we need a broader explanation of what homogeneous culture, identity, and cultural symbols are functional for, and what national-

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ist actors are motivated by. Third, recourse must be made to a clearer definition of the national imperative and its relation to intentionality/rational calculation. There is scope here for the coupling of functional and individualist explanation, which Gellner was reluctant to make. They can be combined in a convincing way by noting that actors can recognize the functions of an institution such as nationalism and can then proceed to use it, or else can deliberately build it where it did not previously exist.

The State, Culture, and Nationalism

Gellner's explanation of the emergence of nationalism is closely tied to his definition of it as the demand that every culture have a state and every state a homogeneous culture. Such a definition is, however, misleadingly restrictive, since a demand for cultural homogeneity did not—indeed cannot—emerge independently of the demand for (1) a certain cultural content, and (2) a collective identity. Nationalism as a demand for an empty homogeneity of culture is simply not possible, and empirically it is a fiction. No nationalist makes demands for homogeneity of culture per se. They make demands for the generalization, or emancipation and recognition, of one particular cultural canon. Gellner's tendency to reduce culture to language must therefore be remedied.

The cultural substance so dear to nationalists—myths, historical memories, cultural boundaries, civic culture, and habitus—are simply left out by Gellner, as epiphenomena. Each nationalist movement, however, as Liah Greenfeld has shown, exalts its own set of values. Early English nationalists, according to Greenfeld, found pride in modern science, in reaction to their awareness that the French were superior in their scholarship of the classics (Greenfeld 1992, 97). The French founded their pride on letters and language; the Germans on *Volk* (ibid. 368–69). The drive for culture to be homogeneous across the territory of a state may take the form of the propagation of myths of origin and uniqueness (Smith 1984) or the identification of "core values" (Conversi 1990; Smolicz 1988) or a unique way of life, of which only an independent state could be the protector. That nationalists often seek material benefits, and that their leaders seek to rationalize industrial societies is clear. But if an explanation of nationalism requires an account of the motivations

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of nationalists, as I argue it does, we must acknowledge that nationalists take pride in (re)discovering their "authentic" culture, that they need to be recognized, and that inventing or reinventing this cultural content is a source of creative excitement to them.

Nationalism is therefore concerned with more than cultural homogeneity. Only by referring to its content can we grasp the bundle of other motivations that theorists have grouped together under the rubric of "the politics of recognition" (see, e.g., Taylor 1992; Honneth 1992). If we accept that not only is the cultural content of nationalism empirically impossible to separate from the drive to homogenization, but that its content also motivates nationalists and thus is causally significant in the emergence of nationalism, we must judge Gellner's theory incomplete.

A theory of nationalism must take account of these forms of motivation, particularly in accounting for cases where uneven industrialization is not a relevant factor. It should also be open to the range of possible functions that nationalist culture can serve in modern society, and not reduce them to industrialism. Nationalist culture can help legitimize a state, with the state becoming the protector of a "way of life" and a civic religion. The idea that civic culture, learned over many generations (cf. Putnam 1993), is a central aspect of culture is an argument made by many nationalists.

The link between cultural content and nationalism is made very clear in the case of the Northern League in Italy. Just as Putnam (1993) outlines the uneven nature of civic virtue in Italy, stating that the South, for historical reasons, lacks the civic culture of the North, the League has taken civic culture as a central theme to justify its broadly nationalist stance. The separatist claims of the League are clearly based on this apotheosis of the substantive content of Northern culture as it relates to the workings of the state and democracy, rather than on cultural or linguistic homogeneity per se. Indeed, the internal federal structure of the Northern League leaves some room for internal cultural diversity between the Piedmontese, the Venetians, and other regional groups. Tax evasion, corruption, and a lack of civic virtue in the South have been the justifications the League invokes for its rough and sometimes racist separatism.[5] This posture is echoed elsewhere, for example in Flemish, Catalan, and Czech separatist nationalism.

Just as nationalism cannot homogenize culture without vindicating a given cultural content, it cannot do either of these without

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constructing a collective identity. With the claim that Ireland should be a culturally homogeneous entity, and the claim that as such it is Gaelic, Catholic, and morally superior, goes the claim that it is a bounded, permanent, and relatively closed group. With the claim that the Basques are a homogeneous group based on descent and language goes the claim that Euskadi identity is timeless and given, and irreconcilable with France or Spain. This is not to conflate cultural difference with political identity (cf. Barth 1967). Rather, the point is that references to cultural content and homogeneity are also attempts to differentiate a group from others (Horowitz 1985, 142; Greenfeld 1992, 15–16). Whereas cultural differences per se do not necessarily imply a subjective sense of group identity and boundaries, nationalists construct collective identity by creating a strong sense of who belongs to the in-group, often through reference to an enemy. Thus, nationalism relies on symbolic boundaries (cf. Armstrong 1982, Barth 1967). The constantly negotiated construction of the in-group involves delineation of what the group is not, invoking themes of habitus, language, descent, history, and so forth (see Eisenstadt and Giesen 1995).

Just as cultural homogeneity cannot therefore be separated from cultural substance and identity, these three aspects of nationalism are intermingled in the mixed, multiple motivations of nationalists, which include the quest for material benefits but also pride and normative ends such as freedom and civic participation.

The Functions of Nationalism in Modern Democracies

National (homogeneous) culture is functional for industrial society, according to Gellner, and this explains the emergence of the national imperative. National culture is also functional for democratic politics and for the mobilization of social movements, however. Just as the definition of nationalism needs to be expanded, therefore, so, too, does the definition of what it is functional for.

Recent theorists of civic virtue (cf. Almond and Verba 1963), in positing it as a necessary condition for the working of democracies, are in agreement with many of the nineteenth-century liberal nationalists (see Viroli 1995, Habermas 1995). The national principle, evoked in countless nineteenth-century European debates about democracy, self-determination, and citizenship, was much more

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than an institutionalized theory of what is good for industrial production. It was a theory of what is good for democracy, legitimation, individual freedom, and political mobilization (see Kymlicka 1995). As Will Kymlicka points out, the linking of culture and democracy in the national principle emerged in part from experiences of the difficulty of introducing democracy into situations of cultural heterogeneity and immature civic culture.[6]

What is the function of collective identity, on the other hand? Nationalist doctrine demands that a nation be unique and that it have a project on the world stage. Collectivities without these features are not nations, according, for example, to Mazzini. Thus, in formal discussions of nationality, there is a strong notion that "identity" is necessary. This rather vague and abused term is, however, a key aspect of the cultural discourse of nationalism: "Collective identity is the condition for the calculation of costs and benefits of collective action" (Pizzorno 1986). Just as cultural homogeneity can be presented as functional for the making of frictionless industrial societies, collective identity can be functional for the solution of collective action problems: problems in creating nationalist social movements are solved by motivating protest, and problems in creating national states are solved by motivating people to support a military establishment or a welfare state. The subjective sense of a relatively permanent collective identity encourages mobilization and circumvents free-rider problems.

There is some evidence that towards the end of his life, Gellner was becoming more aware of the range of functions served by nationalist culture. In a recent essay, commenting on the former Soviet Union, Gellner hinted that he was aware of the mobilization utility of nationalism:

> In the painful revival of civil society, it quickly became obvious that ethnic associations can be revived far more quickly than others. The new political parties tended to be relatively small clubs of intellectuals, whereas it is the "national fronts" which rapidly acquire real and persisting grassroots. (Gellner 1991, 133)

Gellner here makes no reference to industrialism, but rather seems to be saying that nationalism emerges wherever it proves an effective way of mobilizing support. This shifts the explanation of nationalist movements from structural factors, such as industrialism, to

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the function of ethnicity in constructing a politically effective collective identity.

Nationalism and Institutionalism

Gellner argues that nationalists do not know what they are doing. They respond to the national imperative in a blind way, although it may bring them benefits. We have seen some reasons to doubt this view. If nationalists see culture and language as instrumental to other ends, then Gellner's explanation should be revised.

It is the "national imperative" that links Gellner's functional, material, and intentionalist explanations. We have seen, however, that this notion remains ill defined in his work and that the problem of intentionality never receives a satisfactory answer. Are the nationalist intelligentsia really expressing only a new love of culture, without rational calculation regarding what their cultural movement could gain them? If proletarians supported nationalism because of a sense that they were being discriminated against, as Gellner argues they did, surely this involved a calculation about bettering their position through nationalism. Gellner's principled defense of materialism and his narrow notion of intentionality as unitary (no multiple motivations) and materialistic force him to deny that any such individual reflection or choice have a role.[7]

Gellner himself would undoubtedly disagree strongly with much of what I have written. For him, phenomena such as democratic liberal ideals are products of industrialization and have no independent role in the development of nationalism. The broader issue of the role of ideas in history cannot be resolved here. If we are to rescue something of Gellner's theory for the explanation of nationalism, however, we must show how the nationalist imperative of cultural homogeneity, collective identity, and a given cultural content has in fact motivated action.

The problem remains Gellner's failure to define clearly the national imperative. What kind of phenomenon is it? If one looks for empirical evidence of "the national imperative" in action, what does one find? It must be, for Gellner, more than a philosophical doctrine, as we have seen. Neither can it be merely a structural condition, since it is in part a construction of intellectuals and states, and it requires a conception of the boundaries of the "na-

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tion" in order to guide political thought and action. Even on his own terms, though, Gellner never makes clear what it is that actors are responding to. Is it the functionality of monoculturalism per se that explains nationalist action, or does the "imperative" motivate nationalists independently of the process of industrialization? Would it make a difference if homogeneous culture were not, in fact, functional? Would it then still motivate action? Gellner's work moves between intentional and functional explanation without specifying how they relate to one another.

The fact that nationalist movements *do* occur (1) where language is not a factor; (2) where the linguistic movement arguably renders industrial society less efficient in Gellner's terms (Ireland and Catalonia, for example); and (3) in affluent, industrialized core regions such as Flanders, demonstrates that the nationalist imperative can assert itself in circumstances other than those specified in the theory. Nationalism is a script for action that may be employed under a broad variety of structural conditions. Even if we accept that the nationalist imperative originated in a need to rationalize industrial society, it does not follow that all nationalism is explicable with reference to industrialism. The conditions that Gellner sets for nationalism are sufficient, it seems, but not necessary, since nationalist movements also occur in their absence. Clearly, the national doctrine or the "nationalist imperative" is a factor, but Gellner leaves us guessing concerning its exact status.

Nor is it true that wherever a national movement occurs, it is due to uneven industrialization. Recent events show that nationalism is in fact a very versatile political tool: it is used by nationalists not only to foster industrialization, but also to generate legitimation, collective identity, and democracy. A revised version of the theory therefore must take a broader view of the uses of nationalism and should move along the path suggested by Breuilly (1982), investigating nationalism, broadly, as a "form of politics."

But what does using nationalism as a "tool" mean? Even when the definition and functions of nationalism are extended in the way I have suggested, there remains the theoretical problem of agency and intentionality. Gellner's maverick stance led him to eschew relevant theoretical debates about the role of ideas and intentionality in change. But precisely the problem Gellner faced—that of reconciling strategic action with forms of social determinism—has been well explored by "institutionalist" economists, political scientists,

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and sociologists.[8] A clearer way of understanding the "national imperative"—the key to Gellner's theory—is thus to see it as an institution, in a broad sense. Put another way, nationalism is an institutionalized theory of what is functional for—among other things—the mobilization of political movements and the working of liberal-democratic polities.

The motivations that make the imperative so strong have been mixed. Nationalists struggle not only for frictionless, rationalized societies: they also seek liberty, recognition, and the mobilization of protest. State-oriented nationalists may seek to streamline culture, but they also seek democratic legitimation and collective responsibility. It is the fact that the national principle is a convenient means to achieve agreement between these various projects, and to totalize the political movements that carried them, that led to the institutionalization of the national form. Neither the emergence of nationalism, nor the occurrence of individual national movements, can be explained only by one set of motivations.

The national principle would not have been institutionalized to the same degree were it functional only for industrialism. This claim is supported empirically by focusing on the political debates about education and cultural homogeneity, the cultural crusades of homogenization and the nationalization of culture outlined by Gellner. Clearly such nationalist cultural crusades (cf. Bauman 1986; Weber 1977; Greenfeld 1992; Colley 1992) were undertaken for more than the narrow reasons Gellner isolates, and in many cases predated industrialization.

The problems of Gellner's theory give us considerable reason for rejecting the fatalism it encourages. By noticing the elements of choice, design, and intentional agency in nationalism—particularly in its affluent, postindustrial varieties—we can see that there is nothing inevitable about it, but rather that nationalism provides various political projects with resources they desperately need, such as collective identity, civic culture, and an armory of narratives and symbols. To demonstrate the presence of design and choice we do not, however, need to reduce nationalists to either tricksters or dupes. In conceiving of nationalism as an institution, we can see that nationalists have had some vague, growing ideas of what the tool of nationalism is good for, and that for them nationalism is more than merely the cultural infrastructure of industrial economies.

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NOTES

1. Gellner's theory of nationalism was originally presented in Gellner 1964, and has reappeared in various forms since, the definitive statement being in Gellner 1983. A summary can be found in Gellner 1982. Nuances were added to the theory in Gellner 1991 and 1992.
2. Tom Nairn (1993) has dubbed this "egoistic nationalism."
3. The discussion in Hobsbawm 1990 of nineteenth-century debates on the scale of units necessary to become nation-states illustrates the nationalism-as-rationalization argument at work in elite discussions of nationalism. See also Gellner 1972. Friedrich List is the most often noted theorist of economic nationalism; see Szporluk 1988.
4. Indeed, at many points, the direction of the relationship between cultural homogeneity and industrial society—that is, which causes which—is not clear. "It becomes increasingly difficult for men to take religious doctrine seriously. This is ultimately a consequence of that very same commitment to sustained economic growth and hence also cognitive growth, which also leads to social mobility and homogeneity" (Gellner 1983, 175).
5. The author has conducted interviews with League activists and leaders, and made a study of their propaganda (Tambini 1994; 1996).
6. "In many countries of Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, a major reason for the failure of democratization is ethnic conflict" (Horowitz 1994, 35).
7. Indeed, theorists of nationalism such as Hechter and Nairn explore just that avenue.
8. For an excellent discussion, see Hall and Taylor 1994, 14–15.

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Jacob T. Levy

THE MULTICULTURALISM OF FEAR

ABSTRACT: *The liberalism of fear urged by Judith Shklar emphasizes the dangers of political violence, cruelty, and humiliation. Those dangers clearly mark ethnic and cultural conflicts, so the liberalism of fear is an especially appropriate political ethic for an age marked by such conflicts. A multiculturalism of fear keeps its attention on those central political dangers while also noting that some kinds of cruelty and humiliation might not be appreciated without reference to the larger ethnic and cultural context, and that treating ethnicity and culture as completely outside of politics is not the best way to prevent cruelty.*

For many years the Communist government of Bulgaria required that all personal and family names be in Bulgarian; that is, the sizable Turkish minority could not use Turkish names. What was wrong with this, on a liberal account? One could certainly construct an argument based on freedom of speech, or freedom of expression, or a right not to be forced to identify oneself in a way which one rejects. But such an argument would condemn the government of Bulgaria no more than a government that chose, for administrative convenience, to disallow name changes like that of the

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artist formerly known as Prince (to a symbol for androgyny that can be neither pronounced nor typed on a standard keyboard). If we have reason to distinguish the Bulgarian government from the one that disallows such changes, then something more subtle than a freedom of speech or freedom of association argument is necessary. Perhaps there is no such reason. Perhaps a requirement that names be written in Roman letters—rather than in, say, Chinese characters—is every bit as unjust as the ban on Turkish names in Bulgaria, and Prince only offers a silly-sounding example of who might get caught in what is really an unfair rule.

Again: imagine if the United States Census replaced its racial category "black" with the otherwise-identical category "nigger." The example is chosen for its shock value to a particular audience, but governments have often applied category names which were vehemently rejected by those who belonged to the category. The longtime Turkish ban on the words "Kurd" and "Kurdish," the insistence on referring to the Kurds as "Mountain Turks," stands as an example. In any event, what would be wrong with the adoption of such a Census category? True, it would force many people to identify themselves officially in a way that conflicts with how they would choose to identify themselves; but that is true for any system of racial classification. In the current system, those who are strongly committed to the designation "African-American" are forced into the identity "black." Arabs and persons of biracial or multiracial descent also forced to choose among categories none of which may correspond to their self-identification. All of this counts against adopting any official system of racial classification; but it does not allow us to say why forcing blacks to identify as "niggers" would be worse than forcing firmly committed African-Americans to identify as "black."

Or again: the Hindu nationalist government of Bombay has recently changed the name of that city to Mumbai, a name that connotes a city of Hindus. It is not as overtly religious a name as Providence, Rhode Island; Corpus Christi, Texas; or Los Angeles or San Francisco, California. If there is something wrong in the name change, it is not simply that it violates the separationist requirements of a liberal secular constitution.

What, if anything, can a liberal political morality say about such cases? In particular, what can a primarily negative and individualistic liberalism, the liberalism of fear, say about them?

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From Cruelty to Humiliation

The late Judith Shklar discussed the "liberalism of fear" in an influential 1989 essay. The liberalism of fear begins "with a *summum malum*, which all of us know and would avoid if we could. That evil is cruelty and the fear it inspires, and the very fear of fear itself" (Shklar 1989, 29). In particular, *political* cruelty and political terror are to be feared and avoided, not because the state is somehow a morally unique agency, but because it in fact has an unparalleled capacity to act cruelly, to inflict violence and pain, to inspire fear. The liberalism of fear is contrasted, sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly, with (among other things) the liberalism of rights and justice, the liberalism of applied Kantian moral philosophy. Shklar insists that liberalism is a political doctrine first, and one that must be sensitive to political realities. In particular, it must be responsive to the realities of where cruelty comes from and what form it takes.

This seems at first glance to be a rephrasing of the liberalism of negative liberties and fundamental human rights, a liberalism that consists of a series of "thou shalt not" statements directed at governments. Shklar's account is in fact more subtle and more interesting than that, although the protection of traditional liberal liberties is certainly a part of her project. For one thing, Shklar's liberalism is psychologically richer than that, focusing on building up resistance to the temptations of cruelty and power as well as building institutional barriers to them; but this is not the difference of most interest here.

In a later book on the citizenship of American women and blacks, Shklar (1991) notes the historically intimate links between denial of the vote and denial of the opportunity for an independent income, on the one hand, and the general injustices visited on those groups, on the other. She then articulates an American liberalism in which a right to vote and a right to work have a distinctively prominent place. This is neither a move towards theories of the innate value of political participation, nor a shift towards a Rawlsian account of the general moral status of the distribution of goods. Shklar remains a liberal of fear; but the positive political program of the liberalism of fear depends on the kinds of cruelty and the history of political wrongs being responded to.[1]

Avishai Margalit (1996) tries to extend Shklar's work by suggest-

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ing that, while the prevention of cruelty comes first, the prevention of humiliation comes second, still ahead of the promotion of justice and the protection of rights.[2] A state may not be entirely just but may still be decent, where "decency" is equivalent to "the avoidance of institutional humiliation" (and includes the lexically prior condition of avoiding institutional cruelty and violence). Deciding what is humiliating is not a matter of a priori reasoning. The political program of nonhumiliation can no more be wholly derived from general categories and rules than can the political program of noncruelty. While Margalit's work is more analytical and abstract than Shklar's, it still clearly offers an account that is responsive to particular histories and political realities.

This essay is not an exegesis of Shklar's writings, much less of Margalit's. It instead seeks to work in their spirit, offering a liberal account that is sensitive to the forms political cruelty and humiliation take in the world around us. It suggests both why the liberalism of fear should pay attention to the politics of ethnicity and culture, and what a multiculturalism of fear can tell us that other multicultural accounts cannot. This may cut against the grain of some of Shklar's beliefs in particular or the liberalism of fear in general.[3] It might seem that what liberals need to do with ethnicity is figure out how to constrain its pernicious influence, period. Nothing in the modern world is more prone to generate political violence and cruelty than the claimed ties of ethnicity and culture. Surely, then, the last thing liberalism should do is encourage persons to see themselves as part of tribes rather than as individuals!

Such a reaction is too simplistic by far, though it exaggerates a caution that is of real importance. The violence, cruelty, and humiliation that routinely accompany ethnic politics are not avoided by attacking ethnicity, any more than the violence, cruelty, and humiliation of the wars of religion were ended by convincing people not to be religious. The institutional accommodations and arrangements that make up the separation of church and state and the protection of freedom of religious exercise are the model to be followed (in spirit if not in all particulars). The liberal of fear does not say that the proper way to handle religious pluralism is to govern as if everyone were an atheist, and ought not say that the proper way to handle cultural pluralism is to govern as though everyone were a worldly cosmopolitan.

The presence of large ethnic minorities (say, the Tutsi or the

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Kurds) in a state should alert the liberalism of fear to the possibility of ethnic civil war. The presence of small ethnic minorities (say, the Roma in many European countries) should alert us to the danger of less visible but more routine cruelty and humiliations: police beatings, judicial discrimination, children taken from their parents to be raised by majority families, and all the vast array of degradations of names and languages. The liberalism of fear, attentive to psychological and political realities, cannot respond to these situations with simple calls for neutrality or for civic patriotism transcending ethnic loyalties.

Naming Rights, Naming Wrongs

Let us return to the problems of naming with which we opened. The Bulgarian restrictions on Turkish, the American use of the word "nigger," and the name Mumbai are historically and intentionally linked with violence and cruelty towards excluded communities in a way that nonrecognition of Prince's name change, the unavailability of a "biracial" category, and the name San Francisco are not. One must be careful here; the name San Francisco was part of a missionary impulse that also included a great deal of cruelty and humiliation aimed at the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas, for example. But the goal of the name Mumbai is to make clear that non-Hindus are to be excluded from full membership in Bombay; it is to serve as a constant reminder of the ranking of power. It has been a terribly long time since "San Francisco" immediately brought to mind "Catholic monks and missionaries."

In general, liberalism will have little to tell us about (for example) changing the name of a city. But a liberalism of fear, once aware of a particular society's history of political oppression along communal lines, suddenly has a great deal to say about certain name changes. The name Mumbai is an ongoing taunt in a city where violence along religious lines has been all too common. The multiculturalism of fear refuses to say to Bombay's non-Hindus that they should be content because, after all, none of their property has been taken, none of their liberties infringed. The government intended to humiliate them, and the multiculturalism of fear is willing to say that they have been wronged thereby.[4]

The rule against Turkish names is to be contrasted with an ad-

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ministrative requirement that names be spelled in Roman characters, not by some fine analysis distinguishing the importance to individuals of the pronunciation of their name from that of their name's written appearance, but by attention to the political context. The rule on names was part of a package that included a ban on all use of the Turkish language and systematic political suppression of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. I take it that names do have to be in Roman characters on United States census forms, tax forms, and voters' rolls; but such an administrative rule (probably not even articulated as a rule) is *not* accompanied by the suppression of all use of non-Latinate languages, much less persecution of all those who read and write such languages. Someone signing a private letter, an article in a minority-language newspaper, or any variety of documents in non-Roman characters has broken no law and will see no punishment. Ballots in some parts of the country are printed in the very characters in which one presumably cannot fill out a voter's registration card. The choice of an alphabet for administrative forms isn't tightly linked with any more general attacks and suppression. In the United States, for all of the ethnic and cultural conflicts it has faced, the divide between Latinate and non-Latinate languages has simply not been one of the areas of contention.

On the other hand, there are many states in which the choice of an alphabet might be hopelessly linked with a variety of other issues; think of Israel, or Bosnia, or Estonia, or Malaysia. In such places a rule adopting one set of characters must be seen as an attempt to exclude one or two particular rival alphabets which are used by particular communities. In a state deeply divided between ethnolinguistic communities from différent language families, the choice of characters cannot be simply a neutral, administrative problem. An awareness of ethnic and cultural politics gives the liberal the resources to distinguish two facially identical administrative rules.

Why Liberalism?

It may seem odd to use liberalism's apparent silence about some kinds of cruelty as an argument for a particular kind of liberalism. Mightn't it make more sense to point to the pervasiveness of ethnic

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and nationalist loyalties, and of calls for ethnic group rights, as an argument *against* liberalism's appropriateness or workability?[5]

In fact, attention to the fact of cultural pluralism and to the manifestations of ethnic conflict provides good reason to move towards liberalism, particularly a liberalism of fear. In too many ethnic conflicts we see the greatest fear of liberalism come true: the state as an effective tool of violence and power whose capture becomes all-important. The difference between controlling and not controlling a state becomes the difference between killing and being killed. The greater the power of the state, the greater the stakes for its capture.

When the state was the guardian of the all-important soul, nothing could matter more than capturing it for one's faith; liberalism was a political doctrine concerned to lower those stakes and end the state's relationship with the soul so as to put a stop to the violence of religious wars and allow peaceful pluralism. As religious wars fade into history, such justifications may seem crude; liberalism may come under criticism for its alleged stands on metaphysics or epistemology. Ethnic conflict refocuses attention on *politics*; it underlines the need for a political theory concerned with preventing cruelty and making it possible for members of potentially antagonistic groups to live together peacefully.

Multiculturalisms

Not only is the multiculturalism of fear a distinctive version of the liberalism of fear; it also stands in contrast to other accounts of multiculturalism. Perhaps the starkest contrast is with the multiculturalism of recognition discussed and partly endorsed by Charles Taylor (1993). In Taylor's account, cultural groups rightly expect that they will be affirmed and respected by the states they inhabit. They rightly expect that the state will publicly recognize their value and worth. Is this respect just the positive face of nonhumiliation? It is not. For one thing, there is the problem of the compossibility of respect and recognition for each group simultaneously. Again, an analogy with religion may help. Without question it is possible to be tolerant of every religion simultaneously. But it is not possible to affirm the positive value of each religion simultaneously. To the nonbeliever, a great many religions must seem foolish and

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misguided at best, dangerous at worst. To the deeply committed believer, faiths other than one's own (or perhaps a narrow set close to one's own) are seen as mistaken on some of the most important questions of human life. Not all religions make exclusionary claims to the truth, though many do; but no religion can be completely accepting of all other faiths and retain any content. We are unaccustomed to thinking in these terms, because in the liberal states tolerance and respect for our fellow citizens as persons are so ingrained that few go around telling others that their religions have no intrinsic value. Indeed, many believe that each religion may have value for its believers, in the comfort or security or strength it brings them. But this is not to affirm what a committed believer thinks is worthwhile in the faith.

The same impossibility is evident for culture. Noncruelty, nonhumiliation, and genuine tolerance are possible if not always easy. Public affirmation of respect and recognition, though, cannot be available to all cultures simultaneously. Ethnocultural groups develop in contrast to others; all too often a particular trait is valued precisely because it makes members seem better than some neighboring group. To recognize what a group values in its own culture is to accept a standard by which some other groups fail to be worthy of respect. To give recognition and respect based on standards external to the culture similarly sets up a measure by which some will fail, and moreover includes the (hardly respectful) assumption that one's preexisting culture includes the resources for judging all others in the world.[6]

The multiculturalism of fear counsels against spending our time trying to define what it is in cultures that we respect or recognize. The political actors being asked to judge, respect, and recognize belong to cultures of their own, and may be all too ready to take advantage of the paradox of standards in order to reject cultures not their own. But if the finding that a particular person does not command our respect does not license cruelty to that person, how much less does the finding that his or her culture does not command that respect?

The multiculturalism of fear also differs from a multiculturalism of rights, such as that defended by Will Kymlicka (1989). The language of cultural rights, whether the rights of cultures or the rights of individuals to their cultures, sometimes leaves too little room for

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flexibility in institutional design, and sometimes gives too much leeway to symbolic insults.

Nationalism and Fear

As with other issues of ethnicity and culture, the liberalism of fear ought to take a contingent, context-dependent view of nationalism. It should not engage in the search for conceptual affinities or compatibilities between liberalism and nationalism; but neither should it take a straightforwardly hostile view towards nationalism. More than a century ago Mill and Acton argued about whether and how nationalism could support liberty. Mill thought that a pluralistic state would lack fellow-feeling and political sympathy among its people and between its people and its army, and that the state could manipulate societal cleavages to its own advantage. Acton thought it desirable if people had national loyalties that were not identical to their loyalties to the state, so that they would be properly skeptical of the state. Each view seems to be right sometimes, and Mill and Acton's successors should be willing to engage with these questions of contingency and circumstance.

When evaluating a particular manifestation of nationalism, the liberal of fear might begin with a presumption against it, but the presumption must be rebuttable. If the nationalism is secessionist, what is the character of the current, larger state? How does it treat the national minority? Do we have reason to think that the would-be new state will be better or worse to its new local minorities? Perhaps every secessionist nationalism carries the potential for civil war, certainly an occasion for political violence and cruelty to be greatly feared. But Kurdish nationalism, for example, is in part a response to the slaughters and violence visited upon Kurds by (primarily) three states. Even if the liberal resolutely insists that the status of Kurd has no special claim on an individual's loyalty or general political morality, it is as Kurds that a great many people have been killed, tortured, or imprisoned. Something similar might be said of Tibetan and East Timorese secessionist movements; it strains credulity to think that there would be *more* political cruelty and violence in the world were Tibet an independent state, and it seems very likely that there would be much less.

Of course, the fact that the old regime was violent does not *nec-*

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essarily mean that the new one will be an improvement; the remains of Yugoslavia stand as a stark reminder of what there is to fear both in nationalism and in secession. But, especially when the current regime is politically cruel to a national minority on the basis of the national division, sometimes secessionist nationalism can result in more freedom and peace. When the majority behaves tribalistically and equates the state with its own culture, counseling the minority to be patriotic rather than nationalistic is a blind application of inappropriate categories, not a move towards cosmopolitan individualism.

So the multiculturalism of fear can occasionally be a nationalism of fear, recognizing that some group has been so badly treated by the state that it lives in, because the state views them as members of that group, that it makes sense for the group to compete with the state for its members' loyalty. Ultimately nationalism is a claim for loyalty, a demand that persons put the welfare of their state or their linguistic community or their ethnic group or some such group above the welfare of the other groups and ultimately above the person's own welfare. Liberalism is properly fearful of any demand to put loyalty to a group ahead of particular persons or universal moral duties. But when faced with a choice between loyalty to a state and loyalty to a nation, it is a mistake for liberalism to mechanically prefer loyalty to the state. Both can be dangerous, and which poses the greater danger is an empirical question.

Fear, Rights, and Pluralism

The fact of cultural pluralism provides a moment of application for the liberalism of fear. Violence, cruelty, and humiliation are common attributes of ethnic politics, and often cannot be well understood outside of that context. Institutional protections against political violence in a society like Rwanda must, in effect, treat ethnic groups as more real, more permanent than some liberals might like. Whether those institutions take the form of power-sharing representation arrangements, self-government arrangements like devolution and federalism, language rights, or what have you, they will politically recognize the fact of ethnicity. This is no more illiberal than the various institutional accommodations reached to allow multireligious societies to avoid religious conflict. Political cruelty

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and humiliation, too, are often ethnically motivated. Sometimes little follows from that fact; the multiculturalism of fear adds little to what the liberalism of fear has to say about torture, for example, other than perhaps some knowledge about the psychology of some torturers. But sometimes the cruelty or humiliation cannot be recognized without reference to cultural pluralism and particular histories of ethnic conflict, as in the cases about naming with which this paper opened.

If multiculturalism adds to and sharpens the liberalism of fear, then the liberalism of fear does the same to multiculturalism. Whether or not minority cultures ought to be helped in sustaining themselves, whether assimilation or diversity is desirable, whether and how to forge common identities—the multiculturalism of fear insists that these are secondary questions. Neither identities nor groups are the center of attention. Rather, the danger of bloody ethnic violence, the reality that states treat members of minority cultures in humiliating ways, the intentional cruelty of language restrictions and police beatings and subtler measures that remind a member of a minority that they are not full citizens or whole persons, these are the focus of attention. The treatment that persons are given because of their group membership, or that they are accorded when they try to belong to their groups, take priority.

I do not mean to suggest that the multiculturalism of fear, or the liberalism of fear, can do everything that needs doing. The liberalism of fear and the liberalism of rights live in a necessarily symbiotic relationship. Persons who suffer or witness or learn about various kinds of political cruelty and humiliation articulate rules and principles regarding what it is about their victims that these wrongs have violated. Deontological theories of rights and justice are in part responses to the kinds of violence and suffering seen in the world. This is not to say that some such theories might not be true or morally correct; but they are (they must be) grounded in social and political reality. In turn, these concepts of rights become accepted, and something that is experienced as a rights-violation is that much more likely to be experienced as cruel or humiliating.

In a more general sense, it may not be possible to fully describe the injunctions against political cruelty and humiliation without invoking rights, or some moral concepts taking the place of rights. So Margalit, who explicitly rejects the idea that a concept of rights is necessary for a concept of humiliation, still often finds himself

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using such formulations as this: "Humiliation is the rejection of an encompassing group or the rejection from such a group of a person with a legitimate right to belong to it" (1996, 141).

But the multiculturalisms of fear and of rights are not assimilable to one another. Noncruelty and nonhumiliation are in some ways less demanding standards than justice, in some ways more demanding. Sometimes, perhaps, the liberal of fear looks at a set of social arrangements and says, "good enough," when not all of the demands of justice have yet been met. On the other hand, no one's rights have exactly been violated by changing the name of Bombay to Mumbai; but the multiculturalism of fear says that we have reasons to condemn the change nevertheless.

NOTES

1. In the analysis of the relationship between "The Liberalism of Fear" and *American Citizenship*, I follow Rosenblum 1996. For a different interpretation of that relationship, one which sees a move from negative liberalism in "Fear" to a democratic positive liberalism in *American Citizenship*, see Gutmann 1996.
2. While Margalit's book cannot be summarized in a sentence or two, it is worth noting that humiliation does not include just anything that happens to give offense. It is not tied to the self-esteem of particular persons or groups. Margalit uses the term to mean "any sort of behavior or condition that constitutes a sound reason for a person to consider his or her self-respect injured" (Margalit 1996, 9). Each of the key terms in this definition is analyzed and defended at length; but the overall thrust brings the meaning much closer to "degrading" than to "embarrassing" or "insulting," and the work as a whole is closer to "The Liberalism of Fear" than it is to the counsel to walk on eggshells and avoid giving offense to any person or group.
3. Levinson 1995 discusses Shklar's beliefs about tribalism and nationalism, though it is not trying to offer a precise account of her views on such matters.
4. In the terms I have used elsewhere, what I am suggesting here is that the liberalism of fear can provide a way to evaluate "symbolic" cultural claims. See Levy 1996.
5. Such arguments have indeed been made. See Svensson 1979 and Van Dyke 1982.
6. Taylor recognizes this paradox: "The standards we have . . . are those of North Atlantic civilization. And so the judgments implicitly and unconsciously will cram the others into our categories. For instance, we will think of their 'artists' as creating 'works,' which we then can include in our canon.

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By implicitly invoking our standards to judge all civilizations and cultures, the politics of difference can end up making everyone the same" (Taylor 1993, 71). He resolves the paradox by calling for an initial presumption of the equal worth of all cultures, a presumption that informs the subsequent study of what a particular culture has actually created or contributed.

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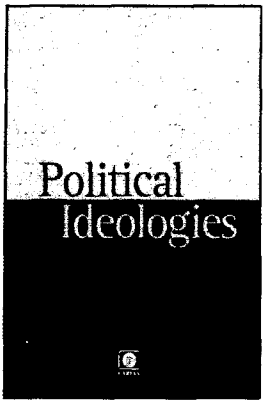

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Eugen Weber

WHAT ROUGH BEAST?

ABSTRACT: *Eric Hobsbawm's* Nations and Nationalism since 1780 *effectively describes the novelty and artificiality of the modern nation and nation-state, emphasizing the role that cultural and political elites have played in constructing nations, especially through nationally homogeneous schools and partly invented national traditions and histories. By defining nationalism as the congruence between nation and state, however, Hobsbawm gives insufficient attention to the sense in which nationalism goes beyond national patriotism to express chauvinism, xenophobia, and paranoia. He is also too sanguine about the ethnic conflicts that will inevitably arise in the multilingual societies he endorses.*

Words change their meaning with the realities that they represent; ideologies and ideals alter as circumstances evolve. Dense and brilliant, E. J. Hobsbawm's *Nations and Nationalism since 1780,* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) traces the fortunes of the two terms, the evolution of their connotations, the rise and probable decline of the historical experiments that they represent. Nation states have dominated the political landscape of the past two centuries. Will this continue to be true in the century to come?

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What Nations Are Not

Words like "nation," meaning breed or race, have been around for a long time, to describe groups to which we attribute (or which claim) a common origin. We no longer use "nation" to describe colonies of merchants, like the Lombards; or students coming from a particular province, as Cardinal Mazarin did when, at mid-seventeenth century, he founded the *Collège des Quatre Nations* (now the *Institut de France*) to educate young men from Alsace, Roussillon, Flanders, and Pinerolo, annexed to France during his ministry. Nor do we use "nation" to mean clan or kind, as in "nation of pygmies" or of giants. But though, as Hobsbawm reminds us, the modern sense of the word is no older than the eighteenth century, a clear definition remains hard to establish.

Hobsbawm's book is based on lectures first delivered in 1985 at the Queen's University of Belfast, turned into a slender but influential book in 1990, and since revised to take into account the crowded years after 1989. The second edition, even more than the first, comes to bury the subject, not to praise it. The deed is done elegantly, in sharp analyses, critical demonstrations, sensible discussions, and succulent quotes. We're not much clearer about what nations are when Hobsbawm is through, but we know a lot more about what they are not; and this agnostic message seems to be just what the author wants to deliver. On the first page of text we hear Walter Bagehot: "We know what it is when you don't ask us, but we cannot very quickly explain or define it."

Like Faust's vision on the Brocken, the more you pursue it, the more the notion "nation" eludes your grasp. Perhaps because, as Paul Valéry once mused, the principle of national existence varies: "Sometimes it is race, sometimes it is speech, sometimes it is territory, memories or interests" (Valéry 1974, 2:1499). Hobsbawm does not quote Valéry (if he had included all relevant *bons mots* he would have produced an encyclopedia, not an essay), but that is pretty much his position, too. More important for his argument, the basic characteristic of the modern nation is its modernity.

The first chapter treats of "The nation as novelty": product, producer, and adjunct of modernization. Witness the essential role that nations and "nation-making" played in the nineteenth century, and the coincidence of national and industrial revolutions. "Nation-

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making" nationalisms reflected and perhaps responded to the requirements of industrializing, urbanizing, mobilizing societies, as did the turgescent administrative states that served them.

In the new machine age, expanding scale meant expanding productivity, expanding possibilities, expanding markets. Nations were about extending the scale of traditional communities to match new material challenges. For Friedrich List, prophet of *The National System of Political Economy,* scale was an important factor of national viability. Most contemporaries agreed. More encompassing sociocultural solidarities supplemented economic self-interest and provided it with a broader stage of activity. The advances of industrial society would benefit material and moral values alike. A nation had to be extensive. Otherwise, said List, given the discouraging effects of *Kleinstaaterei* on the development of industrial production, amplitudinally challenged politics, condemned to an underdeveloped economy, "can only possess a crippled literature [and] crippled institutions for promoting art and science" (31). Since the future of the civilized world depended on *Grossstaatenbildung,* lesser cultures were dispensable. For John Stuart Mill, the absorption of small, hence inferior, nations by superior ones was preferable to leaving the Breton or the Basque, the Welsh or the Scots Highlander "to sulk on his own rocks, the half-savage relic of past times, revolving in his own mental orbit, without participation or interest in the general movement of the world" (34).

Need created opportunity; economic and administrative demand evoked technological supply, and vice versa. Of course, the state had preceded the national state; but one served the interests, broadened the limits, lengthened the reach of the other. The agencies of the national state endowed it with armies of propagandists on the hoof: policemen, postmen, conscripts, schoolteachers bore witness to its importance. The public administration took over essential rites of passage: the registration of births, marriages, and deaths, not to mention school-leaving certificates that soon replaced First Communion as evidence of entry into the world of adult employment. The revolution in communications created legions of transport workers beholden to national or nationalizing forces—all literate, identifiable agents of new-model communities unknown to Louis XIV or Frederick the Great.

The nation was linked to its territory, of course; but territory was only one part of the national equation. By the mid-nineteenth cen-

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tury it had become very clear that truly natural "natural frontiers" were not determined by mountains or rivers, but by language and customs and memories that distinguished one nation from another. Yet would-be nations and even nation-states did not come equipped with language, customs, and memories in operating order. *To create a nation,* all these had to be instilled at schools, with nationally homogeneous curricula, and in one common language; Hobsbawm very sensibly points out that a standard national language could not emerge before printing, but also, and more so, before the mass literacy connected with mass schooling.

Modern nations, Hobsbawm insists, were constructed essentially from above, by the governors of the state and by cultural elites in possession of a written national literature and an administrative vernacular. Nationalizing elites were few in number, the objects of their attentions vastly more numerous. Literacy was exceptional, especially in Catholic lands; and so was widespread usage of a national vernacular. In Italy, the educated elite at the time of unification was estimated at 2.5 percent. No wonder that Massimo d'Azeglio declared in Parliament: "Now that we've made Italy, we have to make Italians!" Until that was achieved, for most people in most lands the nation remained a strange and distant concept. Patriotism was something that came naturally: love of the fatherland, the *patria,* meaning village, home town, or neighborhood, all easy to conceive because familiar and limited. *National* patriotism, which made Ligurians feel Italian and Corrèzians feel French, was wider, more encompassing, and more demanding because more abstract. It did not come naturally: it had to be taught, it had to be learned.

"The political agenda of patriotism," says Hobsbawm (89), meaning national patriotism, "was formulated by governments and ruling classes." Quite right. The fellowship with people one grew up with, the attachment to streets or fields one lived in, had to be transferred from visible, sensible entities to an invisible abstraction, and one that was harder to imagine for the absence of accessible maps and images until the later nineteenth century. So "citizens" were asked to identify with something that they hardly knew, if they could conceive it: contribute to the nation, pay its taxes, obey its laws, fight, suffer, die for it. Even the most passive identification involved a transfer of fundamental loyalties, a rearrangement of priorities, that had to be inculcated (meaning driven in) before it could be interiorized. So national patriotism was didactic, insistent, strident,

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and had a lot to do with definitions: inclusions, exclusions, who belongs and who does not—questions that do not arise at the local level, but that can be crucial at the national one, where nothing is obvious or evident until someone has defined it.

Definition was only part of nation-building. Historical memory, the sense of the past itself, had to be rearranged: shifted from the local plane to a hitherto unsuspected community. In a well-known lecture of 1882, which continues to be read today or at least quoted, Ernest Renan explained what makes a nation: "Common glories in the past, a common will in the present; having done great things together and wanting to do more, these are the essential conditions of a People" (Renan 1947, 1:104).[1] Such were the requirements to be met, more or less, and they could not be until intellectuals turned popular traditions into national tradition, local tales into folklore, the creative manipulation of history into the bricks and straw of national formation.

In national states, consciousness of belonging to an entity with a past, to a "historical nation," was a great advantage. Yet, as in the case of language, even historical nations represented only restricted groups: descendants of conquering Franks, Polish or Magyar nobles, Romanian boyars pollinated by Greeks. And not just castes but individuals had to be repainted in national colors. In Breton homes, Bertrand Duguesclin, hero of the Hundred Years' War, was *an trubard*—the traitor; in French (and Breton) schools he was a French (and Breton) hero. It was not clear just who had done great things, or to whom, let alone done them together. No matter. Histories were invented for peoples without a history, fabricated for peoples with inadequate histories. *Geschichtlosen Volker* became *Geschichtreiche Volker.* All this Hobsbawm presents magisterially.

Nation and State

He is less convincing when he abandons functionalist views for sociopsychological speculations. The imagined communities of nationalism did *not* come into being to fill some emotional void or lack of community (46). They were affirmed over and against existing communities, competed with them, and won because they better fitted contemporary needs, and because more and more contemporaries learned to appreciate the possibilities that went with

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the new scale of national operations and the objectives of the national state.

But what are we to make of nations waiting to become nations, or nations that continue to be nations when no nation-state exists? In his authoritative *Traité de droit constitutionnel,* Léon Duguit, the distinguished French turn-of-the-century jurist, explained that the nation is a person, and "the person nation, distinct from the state, is anterior to it. The state can only exist when there is a nation, and the nation can subsist even when the state is no more or does not yet exist" (Duguit 1911, 1:607). Such pretty fancies represent the protonationalist argument to which Hobsbawm dedicates a skeptical chapter, much of it devoted to the slight role philological nationalism played when so few French spoke French and even fewer Italians, Italian. He could have digressed to consider the advantage of regular exposure to the sort of culture-language carried by Protestant services and holy books. Whereas regular readings from Luther's Bible or the King James version made even illiterates familiar with the vernacular, attendance at Mass offered only a foreign idiom. No wonder that the need to make peasants into Italians or Frenchmen was more pressing than the need to persuade Britons that they had something in common beside rulers. Yet one must agree with Hobsbawm, in the end, that "a people's language is not the basis of national consciousness, but . . . a cultural artifact" (111).

Most of the men who carried the "Marseillaise" to Paris in 1792 did not speak French (Weber 1991), but for the work of national construction, French (like Irish and Hebrew in other times and places) provided a crucial instrument of social engineering, even before monoglot Bretons and Basques realized how disadvantaged they were without a language of wider circulation. Meanwhile, as Hobsbawm points out, newfangled censuses asking language questions forced everyone to choose not only a nationality, but a linguistic nationality. So linguistic advantage and its attractions masqueraded as national identity; but they also spurred it when Jews, or Slavs, or Magyars chose to adopt a more prestigious culture. And linguistic definitions (the only aspect of nationality that could be tabulated) encouraged belief in linguistic identity. Nationality, as Hobsbawm insists, is too complex to be subsumed under language alone (97). But does that relegate linguistic nationalism to be "essentially about the language of public education and public administration" (96), making the vernacular "a vested interest of the lesser

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examination-passing classes" only (118)? Soldiers and shopkeepers in Belgium and Québec, let alone university professors, might disagree.

If a common language is a significant but not an essential component of protonationalism, then what about ethnicity? Are Jews, Basques, and Kurds protonations, as in Duguit's manner of thinking, or mere tribes waiting for somebody else's national shenanigans to inspire new-found aspirations of their own? Hobsbawm opts for the second alternative, adding quite sensibly that even visible differences like color long functioned more as horizontal dividers, separating social strata rather than communities (65). *Négritude* retains political and poetic appeal, but has contributed little or nothing to state formation. The notion of race, like "nation," had to be refined and redefined from longstanding indeterminate use to signify any kind of community: family, clan, profession (notaries, members of parliament), status (nobles, peasants), or kind of people (snobs, cuckolds).

The populations of most territorial nation-states are too heterogeneous to claim common ethnicity; and even France, the first to proclaim herself one, had to juggle the coexistence of two historical "races": Gauls and Franks. Less mythically, but significant in our context, Rabaut St.-Etienne, one of the leaders of the Conventional Assembly, argued that only schooling could and must "give to all that look of resemblance and of belonging to the same family that distinguishes a people" from others. The transfiguring conflation that made race and nation virtual synonyms, at least on the level of aspiration, came with the overpowering prestige of nineteenth-century science, Darwinian evolutionism, genetics, eugenics, phrenology, and so on. One does well to remember that "native," a term that racists hold dear, has the same derivation as "naive." *La terre et les morts* have originated more myths than devotions. No wonder that Hobsbawm comes down against protonationalist mythologies, concluding that nations are more often the consequence of setting up a state than the foundation of one (78).

Hobsbawm uses the term "nationalism" as Ernest Gellner did, to mean "primarily a principle which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent" (Gellner 1983, 1; quoted in Hobsbawm 1992, 9). This is how Woodrow Wilson also used it, and how many dictionaries define the word. I submit that this usage makes it difficult to discriminate between those who direct their

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loyalty to an existing or hoped-for nation-state, and those dedicated to ideological constructs that define nation, state, their nature, and their needs in inexorable ways. Significantly, where my *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* defines nationalism as devotion to one's nation, *Robert's* equally authoritative dictionary speaks of "exaltation of the national sentiment." French dictionaries since 1789 associate this exaltation and exaggeration of national sentiment with xenophobic, exclusive, and isolationist insistence on national identity, welfare, and survival. By 1830, when Nicolas Chauvin had lent his name to the fanatical and bellicose variant that we call chauvinism, the noun had spawned an adjective to describe the doctrinaires of nationalism: "nationalist."

So nationalism, in my experience, represents the acute form of national patriotism: more xenophobic, more chauvinistic, more exclusivist and strident than the original because it is, or claims to be, about the nation under siege, the nation betrayed or about to be, the nation threatened by foes and sapped by parasites. Where patriotism is about attachment, nationalism is about anxiety. And aggressiveness. When the nation is in crisis (when nationalists claim it is), nationalism is about mobilizing, arming, bending all energies, to defend national entity and national identity against manifold threats. That is when the business of defining who belongs and who does not becomes crucial, and when traitors and potential traitors to the nation have to be identified and eliminated. Citizens have to be persuaded of the danger the community faces (and that they are slow to face) if prompt defensive action is not taken to stifle internal corruption, purge agents of decay, eliminate the disunity that weakens and incapacitates. Those who cannot be persuaded, converted, convinced, or enlisted have to be forced to shape up or get out. In this context racism is not really necessary, because the nation of the nationalist may be assimilationist; but racism can provide a convenient adjunct and logical extension of exasperated nationalism, especially in the context of natural selection and Social Darwinism.

The struggle for existence recognizes neither liberty, equality, nor fraternity. Social Darwinism regarded societies as evolving organisms in a world of nation-eat-nation. To counteract divisive conflicts patriots had, since the eighteenth century, developed organic arguments whose very exclusions certified inclusion. The nation was a being ("a person with all the attributes of personality," said

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Duguit: "consciousness and will"), all parts of which flourished or decayed as one. Let a branch of the nation-tree wither, let a limb of the nation-body sicken, and the organism was in danger. Collective well-being was crucial, and the social justice and sense of solidarity that contributed to collective well-being were crucial, because without them the national entity could weaken and rot. Against alien organisms cohesion and unity were crucial; national collectivism was a logical conclusion of national community, and nationalism and socialism did not have to compete but to complete each other.

Hobsbawm points out how comfortably Poles, Armenians, and East European Jews combined nationalist and socialist politics (125); how Russian Communists set out to create "nations" in central Asia where none previously existed (166); and how, before 1848 and after 1945, national liberation functioned as a slogan of the left (148). He does not bother to point out the fraternal and equalitarian discourse of early French revolutionists, Fascists, and National Socialists *or* the universalist and supranationalist tendencies of Napoleonic and Hitlerian imperialism. Largely indifferent to nation-states as such, Hitler wanted to incorporate not just German minorities but Germanic peoples—Flemings, Luxemburgers, Dutch, Danes, Scandinavians, and German Swiss—with no more concern for national identity than Napoleon showed 130 years before him. The achievements of both represented triumphs of state building, rationalized by ideological fantasizing. Neither had much to do with nationality, or even with nationalism in the Gellner/Hobsbawm version, which had come a cropper when Wilsonian national self-determination tried to make state nationality, language, and "ethnicity" coincide. We know that did not work. The new states were as multinational as, and rather more coercive than, the old empires on whose ruins they were built. They did best (not necessarily as places to live, but as national states) when they massacred their national minorities or expelled them. Hitler drew murderous encouragement from Turkish history; Czechs and Poles reasoned as ruthlessly when they expelled their Germans after World War II; today, the daily press provides rich illustrations of genocidal enterprise masquerading as national affirmation.

Though national references sound less and less convincing, they continue to offer arms and flags in the ongoing competition for scarce resources. With disarray and failure rife, nationalists continue

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to blame weakness, discomfort, and failure on enemies outside, traitors and parasites within. My kind of nationalism, the rabid sort, came into its own in the 30 or 40 years before 1914 that also saw "the greatest mass migrations yet known within and between states," which "underlined the differences between 'us' and 'them'" (91). There's no more effective way of bonding people(s) together, remarks Hobsbawm, than by uniting them against other people(s) identified and self-identified as outsiders. Today as then, and more than then, there is one thing that all nationalists don't want: strangers in their home. With yet more millions sloshing around our planet today than in 1900, it was predictable that xenophobia would "become the most widespread ideology in the world" (170). Nationalism has often pointed outward, the better to address internal problems. Such problems were probably never as incandescent as today, just when the nation is rapidly losing some of the functions that made it relevant until the other day.

Nation State, Welfare State, and the State of Identity

The nineteenth-century world economy was an international one, conducted within and between territorial state units. The world economy of today is trans-, supra-, and multinational. States small and large depend on a global economy over which they have little or no control, and which affects their internal affairs. Immigration is difficult to contain. Currency markets cannot be controlled by governments that aspired to rule them less than a generation ago; no more can goods and services. The division of labor is international, financial networks are supranational, and national economies and even governments gradually give way before intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations. In a global economy, political fragmentation is aberrant. Larger ensembles offer the opportunities of scale once promised by the nation: participation in a richer cultural and economic marketplace, emancipation from limiting, restrictive localisms. Even the babble of Babel gives way to simultaneous translation. Too large, too small, or simply beside the point, the operational entity that recently loomed so large appears incongruent, unwieldly, or, at best, defensive behind circled wagons.

Meanwhile, the state's expanding role as agent of redistributive justice makes its fiscal mechanisms less acceptable and less operable,

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even as they become increasingly central. The major remaining function of developed state economies is welfare. But the entitlements of some are the exactions of others; and national solidarity now contributes as much to national dissension as to national community. All this time, regionalist and small-state movements, having abandoned the anachronistic aim of independent sovereign nationhood, seek participation in enlarged units more viable for our times, just as the ones they seek to exit were in earlier days. Human beings define and redefine themselves in many ways. Dominant for less than two centuries, national consciousness is revealed as just one more expression of group identity, perhaps no longer essential when being gay, a student, or a physicist may seem as meaningful. I am delighted to be an American, but I define myself first as a historian, then as a Californian. Would I have done as much half a century ago? Perhaps the age of nations and of nation-states will go the way of universal literacy, or respect for the law, as yet one more temporary experience that flourished for a while and then was left for historians to dissect.

If modern nations and nation-states are on their way out (and that remains to be seen), friction and conflict between "ethnic" and interest groups are older than the political program of nationalism and likely to outlast it. Conflict always outlasts concord. Categorizing human beings on allegedly biological grounds is stupid and can be tragic. Race is not fact but opinion; racism is reality. But "genetic" or "ethnic" discrimination is only one manifestation of the irrepressible tendency to differentiate "us" from "them," not just because of religion, race (whatever that means), culture, class, caste, sexual or gastronomic preferences, color of eyes, hair, or skin, or simply because "they" live in the next valley; but because comparability and confrontation go together. Perhaps all ideologies, including cult, class, race, nation, gender, and the rest, are simply flags around which mobs feuding over this or that gather for a while before surging towards another war cry, under a different banner: temporary commonalities within perpetual strife, contention more elemental than mere cause.

Harmony finds little room in the disorder of nature, order is not a part of the natural order of things, societies operate less close to some happy mean than to precarious extremes, things fall apart quite naturally, centers can hold just so long. Anarchy is not *loosed* upon the world but occasionally tamed and then only briefly, be-

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fore it careens on its chaotic course. Science today belies the science of Darwin's day and Spencer's. The natural (dis)order is not about the best organism winning; it is capricious, chaotic, and destructive. Selection is most natural when it is unpredictable and unruly. It is not necessarily the fittest who survive but the most fortunate; and natural communities, like nature, tend not to stability but to restlessness. Accidents, not harmonies, create the environment, and the political environment as well. Cultural sensibilities are even more ephemeral than cultures. But it is in the ephemeral that we have to live, and that is why even ephemeral constructs cut close to the bone, why linguistic or ethnic conflicts, rationally dismissed, come back to haunt and hurt.

The *nation québecoise* desires (one of its leaders recently declared) to become "a bit independent"—akin, one would imagine, to being a bit pregnant. Ridiculous, until one considers the interests involved, and the particular interest of vengeful memory (*Je me souviens!*), of status envy, of doing it to you after you have forgotten what you did to me. Language, too, is about status and access and success and, sometimes, revenge. Tolstoi's Pierre Beshukhov and his friends spoke French or English to each other, Russian to servants and serfs. What *Québecois* resented, among other things, was that the superior classes did not even bother to address them in their language, and that the better jobs went to the anglophones. The language question is about who gets what, including satisfaction.

In Belgium, Canada, California, linguistic conflict is not cultural conflict, or not just cultural conflict, but struggle for sociopolitical advantage that only sociopolitical triumph can (temporarily) ensure. That is why it is naive to dismiss as absurd, the way Hobsbawm does, the movement to declare English the only *official* language of the United States (171). Would it be absurd to declare Spanish the official language of the United States? Not a likely eventuality as yet, but surely deserving attention. Hobsbawm may regard "the idea that the supremacy of English in the USA is, or is likely to be, in jeopardy" as political paranoia (ibid.). But Hobsbawm does not live in California. He does not have to worry about growing numbers becoming less employable, less assimilable, less integrated, less able and willing to function as participants in communities where communication is of the essence. And, besides, isn't political paranoia what we talk about when we talk about nationalism?

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Historians collect information, organize it, analyze it; Hobsbawm does this admirably. Sometimes the subject of our work is so close to current problems that it cries for answers—tonic remedies for baffling complications. Yet, almost by definition, historians have no solutions, only ideas; and most of these simply emphasize how scant solutions are. Unlike his recently published *Age of Extremes*, which was about the world between 1914 and 1991, Hobsbawm's *Nations and Nationalism* does not sink into pessimism. He advocates non-competing bi- or multilingual societies, pleading that ethnic groups are fated to coexist, so they might as well make the best of it (157). Yet semidetached independence is not national sovereignty; and multilingualism, rather like proportional representation, may well be more representative, but it is also, certainly, more accident prone. When Hobsbawm suggests segmented market and service patterns that might defuse interethnic tensions, the best he can allot to newcomers are groceries, newspaper kiosks, and building trades (159-60). Pakistani or Korean grocers and tobacconists, by all means, and why not Jewish bankers, black field hands and minstrels? The possibilities are endless. Being honest, Hobsbawm also describes polyethnic societies as less stable, with some minority groups condemned to lower social rankings, narrower opportunities, poorer prospects and, naturally enough, a greater readiness to protest (158). One might add the occasional massacre or ethnic cleansing operation, as in Uganda, Rwanda, ex-Yugoslavia, and who knows where else by the time these pages see print.

The multilingualism Hobsbawm appears to endorse would only make such risks and discomforts more likely. Multiethnic plurilingual societies may be the wave of the future, but to a historian they look ominously like the bogs of the past. To mix my images, I cannot help recalling Parsifal's half-brother, Feirefiz, the son of a Frankish knight and of a moorish princess. Wolfram von Eschenbach depicts him as half white, half black, not in one shade but in the broken check of houndstooth that the French call *pied-de-poule*. Feirefiz is the living symbol not of healthy miscegenation which our forefathers practiced vigorously but rejected with scorn, but of contradictory values unreconciled. In the end, Feirefiz, the heathen knight, is baptized and goes off to establish Christianity in India. Not much of a future!

But then, who knows? Martin Walker once explained that, in the jargon of intelligence services, a legend is a carefully crafted false

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identity. Perhaps in the public realm all public entities are legends, and all identities have to be constructed, inculcated, defended, until something more serviceable or seductive comes along. Before national identity begins to fade, however, and before nationalism is ready for the deconstructors, Hobsbawm's deft demystifications will provoke debate and provide good reading. Again.

NOTE

1. There is little that one can add to Renan's 20 pages on the subject.

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Charles Tilly

THE STATE OF NATIONALISM

ABSTRACT: *John Breuilly's* Nationalism and the State *provides an indispensable guide to the history of nationalist doctrines and practices since 1800. Yet it misses a crucial dynamic. Top-down nationalizing efforts by European rulers generated bottom-up demands for autonomy or independence by political entrepreneurs claiming to represent distinct nations. Those demands gained credibility and strength when third parties such as great powers and international organizations validated them. This process established an evolving international procedure and an incentive structure that promote top-down suppression of minorities, bottom-up bids for recognition, and violent struggles among the parties.*

Nationalism—which makes the claim that if we have a state we have the right to create our own nation, and that if we are a nation we have the right to create our own state—resembles religiosity. While everyone who looks at it seriously recognizes its enormous variety, its arrival on bandwagons whose musicians play recognizably recurrent themes arouses suspicions that deep down all nationalism, like all religiosity, originates from a common source. Anyone

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who notices the malice, mayhem, and misunderstanding nationalism generates may—understandably—hope to locate its source, perhaps then to block that source.

The trouble is: what source? We are no closer today to establishing a unitary explanation of nationalism than when Carlton Hayes wrote about it almost 70 years ago. Contemporary analysts of nationalism generally challenge any primordialism that asserts the existence of nations as real, ancient communities, and thereby counter one of the central claims that nationalists themselves put forward. Beyond that point, however, they disagree bitterly on exactly what must be explained and on how to explain it.

In *Nationalism and the State*, 2nd ed. (University of Chicago Press, 1993), John Breuilly proposes a simple reason for our collective uncertainty about nationalism: the word refers to many different phenomena, some of them contradictory.

Breuilly properly distinguishes three very different views of nationalism: as a set of ideas about the origins, character, and political destinies of nations; as a sentiment shared by particular groups of people; and as a form of politics. Advocates of one view typically suppose that their favored aspect of nationalism accounts for the others: that nationalist ideas produce nationalist sentiments and politics, that the politics create relevant ideologies, and so on. In fact, insists Breuilly, the three views do not reconcile easily. Plenty of ideas about the distinctness of nations form without any effort at political implementation; classes that sometimes support nationalist programs at other times become quite cosmopolitan in orientation; and demands for the creation of a new nation-state often occur in virtual independence of great theories.

Breuilly responds to this diversity with a twofold strategy. First he concentrates on nationalism as a form of politics; then he describes its historical varieties, without forcing them into any single model.

For Breuilly, nationalism refers to political movements that seek or exercise state power, justifying their actions with arguments that include three points: (1) distinct nations exist, (2) a nation's values and interests take precedence over all other values and interests, and (3) nations should enjoy political independence. (For clarity, I would have preferred the trio (1) states deserve their own nations, (2) nations deserve their own states, and (3) obligations to nations supersede all other obligations; but Breuilly's statement comes

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close.) Nationalists press for political power on the basis of such assertions. Nationalism frequently arises, Breuilly argues, in the absence either of any well-developed ideology or of any widely shared sense of national identity. Some political leaders enlist support for nationalist programs, just as other political leaders enlist support for liberal or developmentalist programs.

Armed with these definitions, Breuilly taxonomizes. In considering the relationship between political programs and existing states, he classifies the possibilities as follows. Existing states can (1) already have some claim to national unity (e.g., France, Sweden), or (2) be explicitly composite (e.g., the Habsburg and Ottoman empires). Nationalist programs may call for (a) separation from an existing state, (b) reform of an existing state, or (c) consolidation of several states into a new national unit. Thus the Fascists fall into the category 1b: they called for reform of an existing Italian state in the name of the Italian nation. Nineteenth-century Greeks who called for independence from their Ottoman rulers qualify as 2a. Before state-by-state nationalism set in, Pan-Africanists called for the dissolution of colonial boundaries in a new expression of the African nation; with reservations concerning the nationness of Pan-Africa's proposed components, they belong in Breuilly's rubric 1c.

Here and there Breuilly takes up general issues, usually in a very skeptical vein; he concedes some merit to the more sweeping theories of Anthony Smith, Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, and other recent analysts of nationalism, but invariably finds exceptions to their generalizations, and repeatedly concludes that they have pushed their ideas too far. Punctilious historian that he is, he simply cannot allow the reduction of all this complexity to simple formulas. As a natural consequence, he provides us with a sourcebook about past cases, rather than a set of tools with which to explain the next case of nationalism to come along.

Approximately following Breuilly's sixfold typology, Breuilly's sourcebook proceeds from separatist and unification nationalisms in nineteenth-century Europe to Arab nationalism; anticolonial nationalism in India and Kenya; subnationalism in colonial states; and reform nationalism in such major states as China, Japan, and Turkey; before moving on to nationalism within and against established twentieth-century states: unification movements in Africa and the Arab world; reform nationalisms in Germany, Italy, and Rumania; separatist nationalism in Scotland as a type case for a number

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of Western countries; and (in the major addition to this book's first edition) recent nationalism in Germany, the former Yugoslavia, and the former Warsaw Pact. Chronologies by region complement the descriptions. Within the limits set by existing literatures in English and German, Breuilly provides thoughtful coverage of a wide historical and contemporary range.

Warning: the sourcebook proves less reliable for the period before 1800 than afterward. Accounting for the absence of nationalism in Eastern Europe before the twentieth century, for example, Breuilly offers the opinion that there did not develop "either a powerful and privileged class of landowners or autonomous towns with which monarchs had to bargain in order to increase their authority" (373). That should be news to any historian of the Hanseatic League's assertive municipalities, of the Protestant Reformation with its town-by-town struggles over religious identity, or of the Polish realm with its nobles who elected, deposed, defied, and murdered their kings. Nor does his set of containers offer much place for seventeenth-century Norway and Sweden, where ruthless kings allied with Lutheran ministers to create highly centralized national administrations.

Breuilly sustains one central argument across all his cases. The argument is correct and important if rightly understood: nationalism as politics arose with the modern state, and assumes the modern state's existence. It follows that nationalism belongs to roughly the last two centuries, that earlier expressions of distinct political and cultural identities had little to do with nationalism as politics, that nationalism spread throughout the world as a result of the European-style state's diffusion, that nationalism will change or disappear as the international system of sovereign states mutates into other forms of political organization, and that explanations of particular nationalist strivings should have in common at least some causal connection to the kinds of states that have predominated in the world since 1800.

How shall we recognize a "modern state," however, independently of the nationalism it has promoted? Breuilly calls attention to the nineteenth-century emergence of a system of well-bounded territorial states whose rulers recognized each other's sovereignty within boundaries, and which established sharper demarcations between public and private life than have been customary in human history. This is, for him, the system of modern states.

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So far, so good. Then Breuilly falters, indicating that the modern state differs from its predecessors chiefly by resting on the consent of the governed, and by justifying itself with reference to the governed as a political community—in short, by making nationalist claims. Thus Iraq, Libya, Kenya, South Africa, Burma/Myanmar, Paraguay, and a host of other recently or currently authoritarian but also apparently nationalist states throughout the world become problematic cases: modern or not? Breuilly's definition of the modern state leads straight to trouble.

Breuilly could have avoided this conceptual limepit by following paths that other parts of his analysis mark clearly. The states he designates as modern stand out from their predecessors not by their reliance on popular consent or conceptions of the nation, but by their institution of relatively centralized direct rule throughout their territories. Like most large states throughout history, composite states such as the Ottoman Empire, Russia before 1861, France before 1789, and most European colonial regimes rested on contingent compacts with regional powerholders who enjoyed great autonomy within their own domains and support from central state military forces, so long as they delivered tribute and military cooperation to the overarching regime.

Such states ruled indirectly. Eighteenth-century military expansion and its surprising destruction of the market for mercenaries pushed many states to the limits of the taxes, supplies, and fighting men they could extract from subject populations with the instruments of indirect rule. From that point on, they either overcame those limits by establishing direct centralized rule through force, fraud, and bargaining; or they succumbed to militarily mightier neighbors. Vindictive victors, confirmed in the superiority of their own institutions by military success, typically extended instruments of direct rule to newly conquered territory. Surviving states emerged with expanded administrative institutions, greatly increased central control over military forces, and incessant resistance from regions and segments of subject populations that had previously remained autonomous or, at least, insulated from central intervention.

That is where nationalism came in. (I now state my own views, which I regard as consistent with the evidence in Breuilly's casebook.) Top-down nationalism—the insistence that the nation's collective interest, as interpreted by the state's current rulers, should

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take priority over all particularisms—emerged from the practices and then the doctrines that were useful in the state's combat against resistance to imposition of direct rule. French revolutionaries attacked nobles, clergymen, regional rebels, and rivals for revolutionary hegemony in the name of the Nation before sending out their military forces to conquer other European regions in the names of *their* captive Nations. Struggling with resistance from citizens who remained attached to particular privileges and had other uses for their tax money, food supplies, horses, and young men, rulers elaborated doctrines and practices that implemented their visions of the Nation: standardized national languages, national histories, pageants, ceremonies, songs, banners, museums, schools, and much more. All these efforts belonged to top-down nationalism.

Top-down nationalism generated bottom-up nationalism as its antithesis and mirror image. Political brokers who had strong investments in alternative definitions of language, history, and community rallied supporters in the name of oppressed and threatened nations, demanding protection from top-down nationalizers. Having insisted on the correspondence between state and nation, top-down nationalizers were caught in a trap of their own devising: to the extent that interlocutors for regional populations could establish that they constituted distinct, ancient nations, they made credible cases for political autonomy. Following their own international and domestic agendas, adjacent powers often bolstered claims from ostensibly captive nations within existing states.

As Breuilly's own careful chronicle of demands for Greek independence reveals, European powers played the card of bottom-up nationalism against the Ottoman Empire repeatedly, even in the absence of a well-connected, homogeneous political actor within the empire. Beginning in Europe, the great powers created two models: one for top-down nationalism in the guise of modernizing backward peoples, the other for bottom-up nationalism in the guise of liberating captive nations. The latter, using the language of national empowerment, justified the creation of new states.

When it came to twentieth-century decolonization, bottom-up and top-down nationalisms usually combined, with advocates of independence speaking for captive nations but, upon arriving in power, seeking to impose their own versions of the national interest in the face of frequent opposition from within their own states. In both phases, political leaders put much of their energy into orga-

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nizing public performances that broadcast the message: We Are a Nation. National performances usually included some display of military power, but they also frequently represented the nation in question as ancient, culturally coherent, unified, determined, and faithful to its self-proclaimed leaders.

European powers and their overseas collaborators fashioned certifying procedures for the assessment of such performances, first using general peace treaties (e.g., the settlement of the Napoleonic Wars) as vehicles for matching ostensible nations to states, then eventually delegating to the characteristically named League of Nations and United Nations the mechanics of certification. The prize for a successful "We Are a Nation" performance was control of an independent state. Rules of the competition became increasingly standardized throughout the world. Earlier performances, such as "We Are the Rightful Dynasty"—which had the inconvenience of precipitating assassinations and civil wars when no militarily competent adult male, enjoying visible priority according to kinship rules, was available at the death of a sovereign—lost their relevance.

Not every bottom-up nationalist movement, to be sure, demanded or achieved full independence. The availability of the nationalist model, and foreign support for the attendant claims, provided great political leverage to political entrepreneurs whose interests were best served not by independence, but by extensive autonomy within a state that continued to do the dirty work of international relations, military organization, and monetary policy. Basque, Catalan, Québecois, and Flemish nationalists have, so far, combined bottom-up and top-down models by gaining international support for their regional autonomy while imposing standardized definitions of nationness within their own territories.

Still, nationalist models and movements remain a potent force in Europe and elsewhere. Nationalist politics easily accomodated the splintering of the Soviet Union into segments that Stalin had originally organized around nominal nations run by ostensible national representatives who had, in fact, received extensive training in Moscow. Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia jumped like successive divers off the same springboard, their self-designated leaders successively seeking international recognition by the familiar means of bottom-up nationalism, and then attempting (with considerable success in externally supported Slovenia, mixed results in Croatia, and disaster

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in Bosnia) to organize top-down nationalism within their zones of control.

The prizes of nationalism have only increased. Within Europe, a favorable relation to (better yet, membership in) the European Union or NATO will strengthen the positions of those who successfully claim to represent the relevant nations. In Africa, Latin America, North America, and Asia, recognition either as legitimate heirs of the Nation or as distinct nations within oppressive states promises rescue from international neglect. Although in the long run the decreasing capacity of individual states to establish independent policies, hence the decreasing advantage of running one's own state, will diminish the appeal of nationalist politics, that dénouement will take another generation. In the meantime, John Breuilly has it absolutely right: nationalism is less an idea or a sentiment than a form of politics that grew up with modern states, and clings to them like a shadow.

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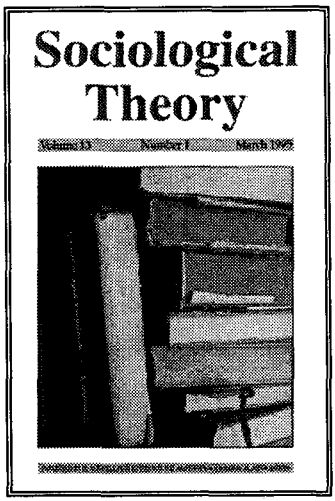

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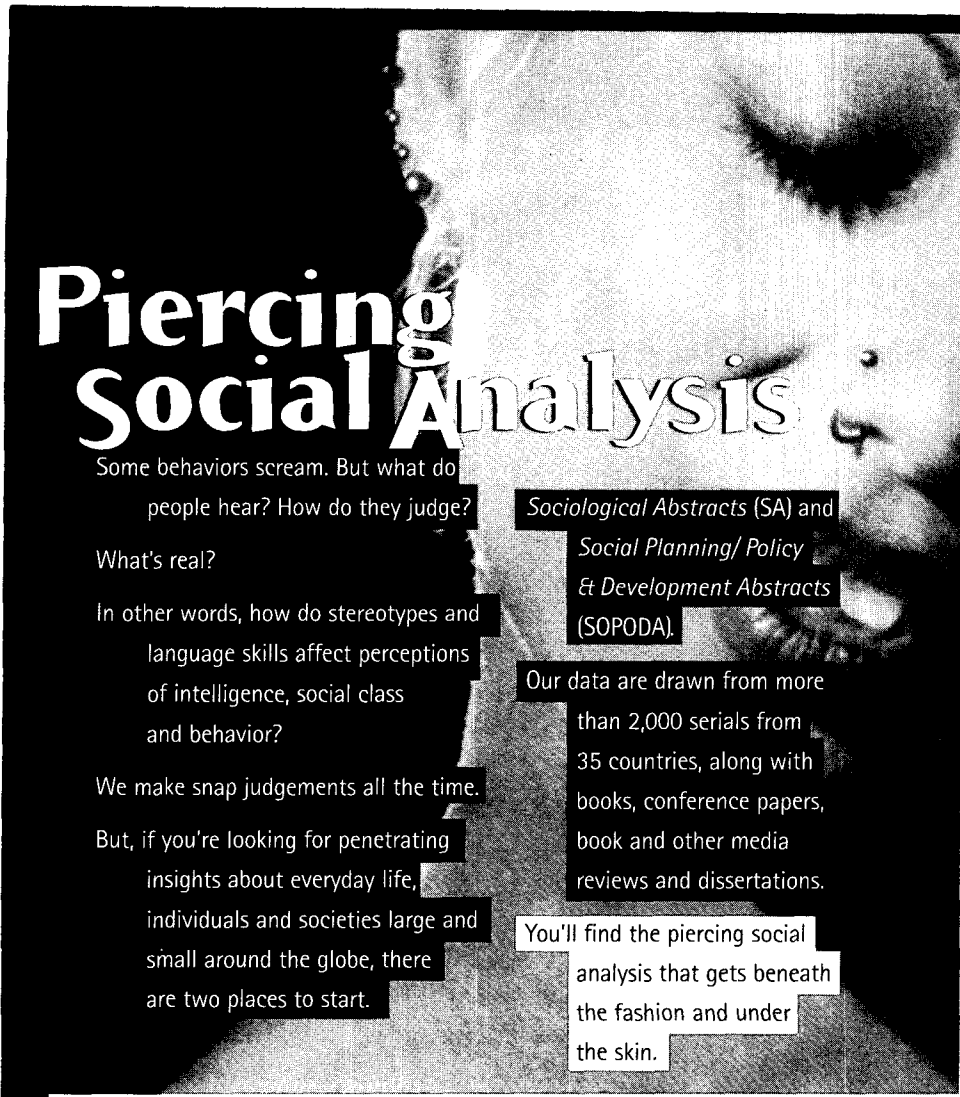

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